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SIMON PETER: THE MAN AND HIS WORK.

A STUDY.

SIMON PETER stands at this hour in a very peculiar position, as between two registers of public opinion. On the one side cavillers have found fault with his low origin, his impulsive disposition, his rough manners, and especially his great sin of denying his Lord. On the other side, tradition-makers have exalted him to the headship of a hierarchical system, and have so surrounded his biography with tales of foolish fancy, that the real man is lost. A fair question is before us—Is the world willing to accept a true picture of the Apostle of the Circumcision? The glamour of what is called high-art, as well as the superstition of high-churchism, conceals his figure. Yet there never lived an honester, plainer, or more thoroughly genuine man. It is unfair that all the useful force of his human record should be surrendered just because a dressing-block is needed in a system, itself created out of a perversion. Even Milton, in his "Lycidas," talks about—

"The pilot of the Galilean lake ;
Two massy keys he bore, of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain) ;
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake."

With the triple crown on his head, and the great keys in his hand, the imagination grows bewildered in trying to conceive of a "pilot" in guise of a priest. Such a man is no more a fisher of men than a fisher of fish. He is but a kind of vague unreality.

Simply told, the narrative of Simon's life is one of the most romantic in this world's history. He was the only man ever known to cast a hook in deep water for a coin to pay his taxes with. He was the only man we read of, whose feet trod on waves, finding, until his faith failed, a foothold underneath them like rock. He came forth of a sudden from

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the obscurity of a recordless existence into a front rank as a preacher of the new gospel ; yet his greatest lesson of doctrine was received from a sheet full of living creatures, clean and unclean, dropped down out of heaven. He was led out of prison by an angel, who bewildered him as he delivered him ; and when he stood at the door of a familiar prayer meeting, the friends on their knees declared he was his own ghost.

There was never anything whatsoever about Simon Peter, to be set down as tame or commonplace. Had he any father to be proud of? Yes ; but all we know of Jonas is that Simon was his son. What was his mother's descent? Nobody can tell ; it was left to after-years for visionary tradition to give her the name of Johanna. Had he a wife? One evangelist says he had a mother-in-law cured of a fever by miracle ; and an apostle adds that he "led about" a sister. Had he daughters? Artists explain some singular pictures by repeating the romance of the palsied Petronilla. Had he any other children? Many scholars still insist that Mark, the evangelist, was his offspring, and had the right to be called literally, "Marcus, my son."

Then again, when we leave the literature of legend, we enter the weird realm of architecture ; and we find the walls everywhere covered with stucco and with gold ; limned with frescoes and crusted with mosaics ; forth from which the rugged face of this key-bearing ecclesiastic looks down upon the generations passing beneath.

In some cathedrals, his baptism is pictured ; in others, that strange meeting with Jesus by the river. In stone, he is kneeling as he was when near the olives in Gethsemane ; in bronze, he is reaching out his finger like a modern pope ; on canvas, he is discovered hiding his face from the ineffable radiance, while Jesus Christ is on the mountain transfigured with Moses and Elias. At one time, this Galilean fisherman meets us at the first communion table ; and then he is singing the hymn before they pass out. At another time, the same figure meets us in the presence of the maid-servants ; and now he is swearing to his terrible denial. Then we notice him outside the gate of a palace, and he is weeping bitterly over his folly in the light of the passover moon ; and before we leave the histories of that period of sorrow, we meet him on the shore of Gennesareth, beside another fire of coals, where Immanuel is putting the question which has come down the ages to each one of us, "Lovest thou Me?" At the last, in solemn shadows of life's evening he appears alone, on the cross, head downwards, crucified with his feet in the air. "Happy man," says fanciful Chrysostome, "to be set in the readiest posture of travel from earth into heaven !"

Thus constantly we recognise that face and form, till we begin to know him from all the myriad saints and martyrs. He really becomes so identified with Gothic arches and clerestory windows in forests of stone, that almost in an elm-grove men catch themselves looking upwards for a possible glimpse of his head among the lines of crossing branches, or the shimmer of sunshine in the leaves.

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Still, it is most likely that the common people read the history of Simon Peter in the gospels rather for its great human features and display of new life in Jesus Christ. He is thoroughly a man. For good or for ill he is Simon, son of Jonas, from beginning to end. Christ rebukes him, and Paul censures him. Yet, in personal characteristics, Peter continues unaltered and unalterable. He did fall terribly many times; but we feel that he rose again in such a radical form of penitence and contrition that he deserves instantly to have one more chance; and we hurry to him with a return of regard. Such a man's battles are our battles. The human mistakes he made are those that we need to be warned against.

There is no one of all this disciple's failings that is away from our reach; our exposures are perilously like his. So a quick sort of sympathy springs up between us. Our sensibilities, in certain moods of self-searching, actually welcome the guidance of his experience. We are not offended by the verses of that hymn, which makes each of us enter a like confession, whenever we sing it:—

"Jesus, let Thy pitying eye call back a wandering sheep;
False to Thee, like Peter, I would fain like Peter weep!
Let me be by grace restored; on me be all long-suffering shown;
Turn, and look upon me, Lord! and break my heart of stone."

Such a life must be worth studying, with a painstaking and detailed canvass of all its particulars. But the whole force of our instruction from it will turn upon the power we have to transfer a series of conflicts and triumphs to our own experience. We must identify him with ourselves; we must, therefore, constrain our imaginations to look upon him as an every-day man. Then, when we realise the mighty meaning of his mission, we shall understand him.

It is no purpose of the writer to deny that Simon Peter received a sort of headship among the apostles; there was a specific work to which Jesus called him in the establishment of the visible Church. By nature he was a leader of his kind. That age he lived in was one of exciting outlook, and eager expectancy. His race is historic for its incarnate enthusiasm and heroic adventure. Rightly has the Jew been called by Tholuck, "The man of a future;" everything in Israelitish annals used to appear waiting for a coming something to complete it. Thus Simon came into his place, like an athlete springing into the arena, with the full consciousness of a work to be done, and a hope to be caught. Our Lord recognised the efficiency He wished in this man, and commissioned him at once for the establishment of an organic body of believers on the earth.

The one turning-point of Simon Peter's history, on which all the rest hinges, is that at which we first meet his face, when Andrew his brother brings him to Jesus. Patriotic aspiration, personal enthusiasm, religious traditions of a matchless past—all find their fulfilment. The

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disclosure of the Messiah in Jesus pervades the entire being of this Galilean disciple; it sways his religion from Judaism to Christianity; it fixes his future career.

It is this alone which explains the conduct of our Lord when He chose such a man for so exalted a place, with so slight a preparation. Looking down through even the next three years—time of mighty meaning and vast import to the world—surely He foresaw, in Divine wisdom, how flexible Peter's faith was to be, how scandalously unsteady his course for a while. He understood, while Andrew stood there, introducing this strange brother, that the near future would disclose all manner of weakness in him. Simon really was going to be no Cephas at all for many a long day; there was at the moment nothing of the *rock* in him but its roughness,—except, perhaps, its power to harden under exposures of discipline.

Can we doubt, moreover, that Jesus perceived in the distance the great shadow of the denial, and all the attendant gloom of the defection in the early Church? No doubt, also, He foresaw the perverse dissimulation at Antioch, of which Peter would be so notoriously guilty that even Paul would withstand him to the face as one to be blamed. We may even imagine that Christ knew all the miserable folly which would follow the bestowal of that new name He was giving to this son of Jonas; how a hierarchy of self-seekers would take it up, and fashion out of it a figment of popish successions; how primacy and prelacy would stubbornly contend over a narrow difference between *petros* and *petra* all along down the lonely ages.

Yet our Lord Jesus chose and called to Himself this man; advanced him to a position of authority, and laid on him His charge. From all which it would seem clear, that, while he is to be accepted as available, he cannot be pronounced altogether infallible; he may serve well as an organiser, but he makes poor show as a pope.

Within the past year, with a small company of tourists we stood upon the crown of the low hill in Rome, where the tomb of Cecilia Metella lifts itself beside the Appian Way. We enjoyed an uninterrupted reach of vision for miles away across the Eternal City. The Sabine mountains, lengthening out their straggling outlines, shadowy and blue, formed the framework of the landscape, on one side close to the Alban Hills. But the Campagna opened wide and free: at the first, desolate and bare, save that now and then the small wild flowers in the grass lit up the marches with colour; then, near the suburbs, there was here and there a villa; till, at last, the confused huddle of the houses began to display their red-tiled roofs, some campaniles blackened with time, many palaces, ruins, and churches—mingled in uninteresting masses of stone structure—all that goes to make up the modern town, the mystery and majesty of Rome.

But just when the afternoon sun drew the long shadows across the plains, and that wonderful glow in the west took possession of the atmo-

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sphere—that peculiar, indescribable, familiar, ruddiness of the Roman sunset—the yellow flitting over the violet, and the purple quivering delicately in the orange, with matchless shifting and interchange of hues—we recognised those vast edifices beyond the Tiber, which are grouped around the Vatican. And over the irregular bulks of stone, rose that incomparable dome of St. Peter's Cathedral, like a round bubble in the air, "floating over the worship of the city." Then, as the wondrous beauty of that peerless cupola was disclosed, we all felt the meaning of Hawthorne's grand phrases of description, and quoted them with thorough appreciation:—

"At any nearer view, the grandeur of St. Peter's hides itself behind the immensity of its separate parts, so that we see only the front, only the sides, only the pillared length and loftiness of the portico, and not the mighty whole; but at this distance the entire outline of the world's cathedral, as well as that of the palace of the world's chief priest, is taken in at once. In such remoteness, moreover, the imagination is not debarred from rendering its assistance even while we have the reality before our eyes, and aiding the weakness of human sense to do justice to so grand an object. It requires both faith and fancy to enable us to feel, what is nevertheless so true, that yonder—in front of the purple outline of the hills—is the grandest edifice ever built by man, now painted against God's loveliest sky."

Next evening we were within the building at vespers. Down among the kneeling throng of devotees came the parting rays of the daylight, striking through the upper windows over the arches. Mysterious music echoed around us through the corridors, played by organs concealed, and sung by sweet voices out of sight.

We stood leaning upon the stone railing which surrounds what they say is the sepulchre of Simon Peter. There, they tell us, is the dust of the old fisherman waiting for the resurrection morning. High above us rose the canopy of pillared bronze, fashioned out of plates which perhaps Paul saw on the Pantheon roof when he entered this imperial city, a prisoner of the Lord in chains. Beside that crypt, beneath which is the so-called tomb of this son of Jonas in all the glory of shining candles and reverent hearts, we stood for an hour in silence, just allowing ourselves to be touched and swayed by the unseen influences around us. It does not appear like an exaggeration to say that no man with sensibilities keen and imaginative—with any measure of poetic feeling moving him—is always able to resist the tremendous force of this sensuous show. Here arises a monument, which, seen from outside or inside, is the finest thing in the world. What gave it to Simon Peter? This inevitable question keeps pressing: how did the fisherman of Galilee reach an exaltation of fame like this? How was his life lifted into historic significance such as has moved the whole world for eighteen centuries in this way? The answer is easy: Simon was the exact agent the Lord wanted to employ at that time. The explanation of all extra-

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ordinary successes in this man's life is found in the fact that Christ had a work for him, and Christ made a choice of him.

The period in this world's history, into which his life fell, shows how he was fitted at such a moment for the service given him. Great exigencies had arisen, and the dearth of true men was simply pitiful. When Simon the son of Jonas was a boy of some ten years playing among the pebbles upon the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus of Nazareth was born at Bethlehem. Thirty years afterwards, the whole Jewish nation was swayed with a tremendous discussion concerning the coming of a Messiah; but at the same moment it was convulsed with a still more awful question, whether this Being who had moved the people so, was Himself the Christ they sought. Then all the sceptical forces in the world seemed acting restlessly at once. The Hindus' fable is that this old earth is lodged on the back of a tortoise, and frequently along the ages it occurs that the tortoise becomes wearied, and shifts its painful position: that makes an earthquake. There is something like this which is not fable: this world does rest on the back of a primeval reptile whose name is Unbelief, and now and then he turns piteously in his slime. This was what made most commotion at the time when Tiberius was emperor and Herod was king.

What was wanted was—a man. There was no lack of monarchs. But that did not help much. Inspiration has said, "For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof; but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged." It is an Oriental malediction down even to this present day, "May God multiply your sheikhs!" It was thought a very witty thing to say, as the old moralist put it, "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." But one who loves his country sighs when he has to admit it is true. Palestine was a poor tributary of the Roman empire; and the government found no lack of tax-gatherers for its infamous purposes of extortion among the Jews themselves. Standards of decency were scandalously lowered. Barriers against corruption were all broken down. It was to be expected—"The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted." But when Palestine needed patriots—when the long-predicted King called for subjects—when penitents to receive and preachers to proclaim the new Gospel were wanted—there was no response. Men became more precious than gold. Where were such men to be found in that day?

Genuine men must be *looked up*, or else *raised up*. The first process is discouraging. The volatile Greeks were startled on one occasion to see Diogenes, in broad day with a lantern, peering behind every door as if he had lost something. They asked him what he sought, and the cynic replied, "I search for a man: I found a few women in Athens, and some children in Sparta; but I have never seen a man yet." There is not often much hope of that.

The Scripture expression is "*raised up*." We are told that the Lord

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"raised up" Othniel; He "raised up" Moses; He "raised up" David; it is even said that He "raised up" Pharaoh. Hence the disclosure is beyond any contradiction, as a settled principle in the Divine government: God leaves nothing to accident. There is no good in waiting for the coming man to arrive. When the Lord is ready for his presence, He will summon him to the lead. The coming man of every great exigency in human history, so far in the annals of the race, was, after all, found to have been on the ground the whole time, only nobody knew him by his real name.

God's choice is all that can be needed to render the most unremarkable individual eminent. Divine wisdom deliberately selected these humble but trustworthy witnesses of the Messiah's mission and work, and in their middle life hurried them startlingly out into public notice. The evangelists count them as in no wise worthy of their pens until they have gained the dignity of a recognition from Immanuel, the Saviour of the world. But the instant they became His followers the swift record began to follow their action. As they held up the torch of truth through the prominent years of their evangelical service, and waved it widely so that all darkened men should see the face of Jesus, they could not help but that their own countenances should be unconsciously brilliant with the light which their fidelity and enthusiasm flashed around Him.

But beginnings are very frequently small and dull. And most likely there will always be found some cavillers who will wonder at the choice that was made of such persons as these first emissaries of the Gospel. Five apostles at once from a little village of seafaring men! And Simon, son of Jonas, to be put in the lead!

Some things there are that people ought to remember. One is that Christianity, as a system of religious faith, has been definitely constructed for propagation by *rising*. Religion kindles in an upward direction—like a flame. Grades of society must be set on fire, like layers of twigs, *at the bottom*. The Jews were unphilosophical when they asked as a test question, "Have any of the rulers believed on Him?" If they had, the common people would never have heard Him gladly. Humble souls are exalted by the reception of Jesus' Gospel; proud souls have to go down and be humbled before they can come up. To have attempted the conversion of that Israelitish nation through the reigning family of Herod and the nobles would have been as preposterous as to attempt to warm the sullen waters of the Dead Sea by floating beacons on its surface.

Again, it ought to be remembered that all the pressure exerted to prove these men mean and uneducated only redounds in the end to the glory of that Divine wisdom which selected them. For those mighty successes which the Gospel has achieved through their industry show the working of celestial forces in exact proportion to the human weakness involved. This is the firm and unfailing retort of the ages. If men's wisdom had taken the evangelisation of such a world in hand, it would

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have selected the profoundest rabbins, the acutest philosophers, the most eloquent orators, so as to grapple with the wilfulness of any opposition which Christianity was inevitably to receive. When Celsus urged that the apostles were "but a company of mean and illiterate persons, sorry mariners and fishermen," Origen was quick to return upon him the answer, "Then it is evident their power was from Heaven, and their religion Divine."

Still, some good people insist on thinking of Simon's after-record of inconstancy and rashness. And it strikes prudent men as risky and indiscreet to peril so much on so little—to go to such a sea-shore to begin Christianity, and to start with such a sailor.

Here, as well as elsewhere, we may settle one great principle in God's choice of men, as revealed to us in His Word. The Divine selection of agents has always been based upon *availability*, not upon goodness—upon efficiency rather than character.

If anybody chooses to go so far as to assert that Jesus, in accepting Simon Peter with so poor a prospect, intelligently made choice of a man fairly conspicuous for his defects, in order that all the glory of grand success in the future should necessarily be given to God where it belonged, it might not be easy to obtain immediate acquiescence; but he would have the privilege of quoting most appositely for his purpose the familiar text: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

But we need not go so far as that. It is not necessary that we should believe that the Lord selected Simon Peter for such an office because of these plain defects; rather, surely, in despite of them. More likely, by far, he chose him for some wonderfully fine elements of character he possessed for a certain work He had specially ordained him to do. He received him to become a Christian, of course, because he was a repentant and believing man. But as His apostle he selected Peter—as He seems all through the New Testament, and as Divine Wisdom seems all through the Old Testament, to have chosen human instruments and agents—because of executive efficiency and promise of serviceableness in the accomplishment of the extraordinary results He desired. For this truth comes out in the history always—the all-wise God selects men for an end and for an acknowledged purpose; and He grounds His preference on their real fitness to compass the end and carry out the purpose. Hence, when we go on, looking always for high virtue, seeking for exemplary superiority in goodness, and searching for

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striking evidences of perfect sainthood in the divinely-chosen instruments of history, most likely we shall be simply disappointed, and perhaps ashamed.

We are told in the Old Testament that David was a man "after God's own heart." Now, there is no need of working up a scandal at this by calling to mind David's awful sins; for, exegetically, that text means only that David was sought as the best man to execute what was in the Lord's heart. In the New Testament the rest of the verse appears added on just to guard against mistake—"I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, *which shall fulfil my will.*" That is, God had a certain purpose, and He chose David explicitly to carry it out, not because of his moral character, but because he was the most available person at hand for His use. Just so now in the case of Simon Peter.

A man was wanted: here, then, he is found. Simon Peter commences a career: it is evident that refined and elegant people are not going to judge him fairly at the beginning. He makes a dreadfully poor show. We shall have to wait a few years, and then turn to our Bibles again. We find there two letters—called, in ordinary, quick-cut phrase, First and Second Peter. Who composed those epistles? This same man? Certainly; the Bethsaida fisherman. Thoroughly educated students have said that those two fragments of inspired Scripture are finished in the finest style of Greek prose in the New Testament. Who taught this man to write? What experience was it which moulded and mellowed that hard character into refinement, into tenderness ineffable, gentleness and beauty?

There is no verse in the Bible more manifestly true than this one—"The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." Insignificant indeed was the journey to Bethabara which led this man to meet his Master. But the transformation that followed it was overwhelming. A great world lies between Simon and Peter. And the "man" whom Christ chooses must be estimated wisely when the result of the choice is known. "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee."

Some respect is due to Simon Peter. It is easy enough wildly to find fault with him; but we may as well be candid. Peter is an attractive sort of man after all. He is bold, generous, tender-hearted, and earnest. Grace has a sharp fight with him, but Grace wins in the end; and while most of us are stumbling along, and exclaiming, pitifully discouraged, as did John Howard more than once, "O Lord God, why *me?*" we may as well remember that the last word this apostle ever wrote was a thoughtful admonition and counsel—"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

It is time to have done with these cavils at the behaviour of Christian

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men. They were never set before us because of goodness. None of them are perfect. It will be well for most critics to imitate their strong points before they caricature their weak ones. Let us say to each other seriously—with all recognition of Peter's failings, and not a denial of one of them—that any man who enters heaven will not find a low seat if he is assigned a place at that old fisherman's feet!

CHAS. S. ROBINSON.

THEOLOGIANS OF THE DAY—EBRARD OF ERLANGEN.

A FEW weeks ago we attempted to render into the spirit of the English language the theological views of one of the greatest living leaders of evangelical thought in Germany. We found in Dr. Dorner the representative of a tendency which of late years has been increasingly manifested by the German mind—the tendency to render itself more English by placing at the centre of its theology not the worship of an abstract power, but the recognition of a personal life. We found that—partly by reaction from the mythicism of a Strauss and the negations of a Feuerbach, and partly by discovery of a real want in the religious life of the country, speculative philosophy had been struggling to renew its youth by assuming as its postulate the belief in a personal God. We intend on this occasion to select another living representative of what may be called this revival of religious philosophy in Germany; and out of the many that might be chosen we take Professor Ebrard of Erlangen.

We have selected Professor Ebrard because he is at once like and unlike the subject of our previous study; so like as to reveal the presence of a common tendency, so unlike as to preclude the notion of imitation or collusion. Like Dorner, he has set before him as at once the starting-point and the goal of all theology, the clear and unqualified recognition of a personal Head of the Church; the person of the God-man is in both systems the beginning, middle, and end. Like Dorner, he insists on attributing to the God-man the riches of earth as well as the riches of heaven, claims for Him the crown of nature, and sees in Him the goal of science. Yet the attitude of Ebrard towards nature is no longer the same as that of Dorner. Dorner approaches the religious problem from the stand-point of the man of science, reasons from the principles of matter and mind, and seems to use Scripture chiefly as an illustration of his conclusions; Ebrard professes to make Scripture his basis, starts by an appeal to the testimony of the written Word, and uses the page of nature, chiefly as a corroboration of the page of inspired truth. Dorner is essentially a Lutheran; Ebrard has strong proclivities

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towards Calvinism. In Dorner we see a very abstract German, forced by a religious necessity of his nature to adopt the habits of an Englishman, and following these habits, not without grumbling; in Ebrard we seem to see one who, by nature, should have been a Scotchman, naturally prone to rest in the old paths, and unwilling to travel beyond the prescribed limits; yet, by some freak of fortune, transplanted into an atmosphere where he is forced to keep in abeyance his native prepossessions. It is not without significance that a man of such a type occupies the theological chair of Erlangen. There is a strong connection between Erlangen and Scotch theology. Scotch theology is Calvinistic, and Calvin was a Frenchman. Erlangen has been greatly indebted to France, specially indebted to French Protestantism. When in 1685 the revocation of the edict of Nantes drove from their native land 500,000 Protestants, the box of ointment which was broken diffused its fragrance through the world. These men, amongst the bravest and the most enterprising their country had produced, carried into other lands the energies which that country had refused to employ, and contributed to enrich those regions whose generosity had granted them a resting-place on their soil. Erlangen had profited much by the reception of these fugitives; her manufactures had grown, her wealth had increased; above all, her university had risen and flourished. From very small beginnings did that university arise. When in 1743, under the auspices of the Margrave of Bayreuth, it first appeared in the literary firmament, it gave little promise of its future eminence; but in the course of 130 years its rise has been steady, and its progress sure. It is scarcely to be wondered at that within the walls of this university there should linger some of the echoes of that reformed Protestantism, to whose eloquent voice it has been so much beholden. It is not surprising that to a man like Ebrard, pervaded with intellectual sympathy, and skilled in the tracing of facts to their historical relations, the present position of Erlangen should have suggested a powerful interest in the theology of an older day. Accordingly, of all the speculative theologians of Germany, he is perhaps the most scriptural. In his work entitled "Gospel Studies," he has taken his stand on the historical footprints on the sands of time. He has recognised as the point of departure for all Christian speculation the sober basis of historical fact. He has accepted the records of the Christian narrative, not, indeed, without an intelligent measurement of evidence, yet with the most orthodox and unwavering confidence. The events distinctively called supernatural are received by him with no preliminary prejudice. Prepared by his Calvinistic learning to recognise a supernatural force behind every natural movement of the human soul, he cannot see in the record of a Christian miracle anything which should predispose the mind to turn in disgust from the examination of the record. Rather does it seem to him that in a sphere which is essentially and necessarily beyond nature, the record which would deal with its occurrences must be pervaded by a supernatural atmosphere, and that

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the history of Christianity which is most worthy of belief, should be the history which is furthest removed in its details from the ordinary records of human life.

Such is the scriptural foothold on which Ebrard has planted himself. Yet, after all, it must be remembered that he is a German. He is living in an atmosphere of speculation, and on one side of his nature he is not at war with that speculation. The tendencies of his age and country have not passed him scatheless by. As we turn from his "Gospel Studies" to the consideration of his more elaborate "Christian Dogmatic," we find ourselves between two opposing currents, each of which in turn appears to have the mastery. On the one side, we see the influence of a traditional past, whose memorials are sacred, and whose very dust is dear, an influence beneath which Ebrard almost bends in submission to the theology of an older day. On the other side, we see the spirit of the time, fresh with literary activity, and replete with scientific power, refusing to acknowledge that any sphere is closed to its investigations, and boldly entering in where a past generation feared to tread. The result of these opposing influences is very conspicuous in the work of Ebrard; they expose it to an occasional inconsistency, and they subject it to a continual vagueness. Indeed, of all the evangelical theologians of Germany he is perhaps the most obscure. His views have been characterised as unintelligible to any ordinary mind. They have not escaped an even severer censure. It has been said by one of the ablest and most evangelical theologians of this century that the theology of Dr. Ebrard is no longer that Gospel which was adapted and designed to be proclaimed to the poor. With such a statement we cannot sympathise. The most elaborate system of astronomy does not prevent the astronomer from sharing with the peasant in the most poetic vision of the stars. The most fervid religious impressions are capable of scientific analysis and scientific representation, and it detracts nothing from the value of these impressions in themselves that they can be put in scientific form. The Gospel which is preached to the poor and rich alike is a religion, but it is to the advantage of every religion that it should be able to become a theology. Theology is to religion what the phonograph is to the human voice; it preserves the impression in a new form when the old form has passed away. Religious impressions, as long as they remain mere feelings, are of all things the most fugitive; they rise and fall with the changes of the atmosphere. To preserve them they must be crystallised; to keep the old metaphor, they must be phonographed. The peasant, no doubt, will not recognise the voice of his first religious impressions in the new scientific sound which they have received from systematic theology; but that by no means proves that the new sound is another Gospel. The fact of vision involves the laws of vision; yet millions who know the former are utterly incapable of understanding the latter. It is not for the sake of the peasant that his impressions are taken down

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and preserved ; it is for the sake of humanity. Every man, even the crudest and the most unsophisticated, is an unconscious landmark of progress ; he indicates the state of the world, or the state of a section of it, as clearly as the milestone indicates the length of the journey.

Theology stereotypes a man's religious impressions, and hands them down to future generations ; by that process the humblest individual, the most unlettered peasant, the most unsophisticated mind becomes a phenomenon, and a fact for the study of the philosophical historian. We shall not, therefore, contend that the system of Ebrard represents another Gospel than that of the poor, merely because it is unintelligible to the poor ; nor shall we hold it to be a heresy to the ordinary mind, even if it should be proved that the ordinary mind cannot grasp it. We shall consider the system of Ebrard as an attempt to philosophise the Bible, analogous to the attempt of Delitzsch in his "Bible Psychology." Where we think he has succeeded in his effort to construct a philosophy, we shall deem the process not a loss but a gain to religious faith ; where we think he has failed in his effort, we may still hope that others will succeed. Meantime, our main design is one of exposition. We intend, for the sake of the youthful student who may wish to prosecute the study of the more recent and the more evangelical forms of German theology, to attempt, as briefly and as lucidly as we can, the rendering into English of one of the most abstruse, and, at the same time, one of the most prominent representatives of these views. In doing so, we shall seldom revert to criticism ; we shall leave the student to criticise for himself. Our task shall be accomplished when we have presented in an English garb, and made recognisable to an English eye, the outlines of a system which in its native terminology is to the minds of our countrymen repulsive and unintelligible.

The starting-point in the theory of Ebrard is the nature of unfallen man. Man was made in the image of God, and the image of God is a Trinity. To say that man was created in the Divine image is to say that he was distinguished from all creation by having a tri-une nature. On one side of his being he was a part of the world of nature ; he possessed a material body, and in that possession he was allied to the forms of matter. On another side of his being he belonged to the world of spirit ; he had certain mental faculties which were conscious of their own operations. But behind the body and behind the self-consciousness there was a third power—the self who *was* conscious, the mysterious force or will, or personality which exists before all its manifestations, and which recognises its existence in the word "I." When a man says, "I think," "I feel," "I am conscious," he indicates by the very expression that he is himself behind the operations, both of body and of mind, and that body and mind simply reveal the presence of a mysterious agent behind the scenes. Previous to the fall of man his tri-une nature was complete. There was a perfect harmony between the three modes of his being, and that harmony consisted in the fact

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that each part of his nature occupied its appropriate sphere. There was no strife for pre-eminence between the three elements; there was a recognised principle of subordination by which the one yielded the empire to the other. The agent behind the scenes was monarch over all. To say that man was created with free-will is to say that in the days of Eden the will or personality of man dominated all other parts of his nature, and was lawgiver to his whole being; these were the days in which personality was the greatest force in the universe. Man had power over nature; in other words, the will had power over the body. It was no wonder that the earth should yield her fruit spontaneously when it was dominated by the life of the human soul. Man had power over mind; in other words, the will was stronger than the imaginative consciousness; it could weigh passion and reason in the balance, and could find the former wanting. The whole man—body, soul, and spirit—was sanctified by the perfection of their union.

The fall broke the trinity and dissolved the united elements of human nature. The elements still existed, but they existed in comparative isolation from each other, to some extent in antagonism to each other. That discordance took place which Paul so graphically portrays as “the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.” The will ceased to be free; it became the slave of the imaginative consciousness, desire took the precedence over principle, and passion usurped the throne of reason. The consciousness ceased to be free; it became the slave of external nature, which was represented in man by the life of the body; the pride of knowledge had itself to succumb to the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye.

How was the paradise lost to be regained? The pitcher had been broken at the fountain; at the fountain alone could it be restored. The real cause of the fall had been, not the decay of the body or the dimming of the conscious faculties, but the decline of that mysterious personality which lay behind the body and behind the faculties; in other words, the enslavement of the will. Any attempt to restore man must begin by restoring his personality; he did not want a new body, he did not want new powers of mind; he wanted a new will, a new force, a new bond of harmony to restore the ancient subordination between the powers of the mind and the powers of the body. Where was this new personality to be found? Clearly it must come from Him who created the first. Man in the image of God had failed; the only reserve left was God in the image of man.

Here, then, was the great problem—how God was to become man, how the new, the Divine personality was to restore that bond of harmony which the fall had broken. We have seen in our previous paper how Dörner tried to solve that problem. There was a human child on earth and a Divine life in heaven, and the Divine life poured into the human child so much of its divinity as would make it a perfect child. Not so, says Ebrard; with him there are not two lives, but only one—

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the Divine life in heaven, and out of this Divine life the human child is made, its vitality faints and languishes until its intensity is no greater than an infant's breath. Let us make the difference quite clear. With Dörner there is a bed of a river waiting to be filled; into that bed an ocean gradually pours so much of its waters as will suffice to make it a full river. But with Ebrard there is no river's bed; the ocean itself is to be dried up until it has been diminished into a river's bed, and is then allowed to keep only so much of its water as will be necessary to form the river. With Ebrard the incarnation of God in humanity is neither more nor less than the self-emptying of God. The humiliation does not consist in parting with some outward effulgence or in surrendering for a time the empire of the material universe. Ebrard feels that no diminution of outward glory would really be a humiliation to Him whose glory is His spiritual essence. He feels that if the Divine life would submit to humiliation, it must submit to be lessened spiritually, to be humbled in its stronghold, to be narrowed in the infinitude of its being. If the incarnation be a sacrifice at all, it must be of the nature of a Divine death; the human must be regenerated by the actual poverty of the Divine. Omnipotence must empty itself into a human power. Omnipresence must narrow itself into a human presence. Omniscience must restrain itself into a human knowledge. Immensity must compress itself into a human form. Eternity must contract itself into the dimensions of an infant life. To take upon Him the seed of Abraham was to struggle into death, and the process of death was begun in the process of incarnation.

It must not be supposed that in holding these views Dr. Ebrard is at all peculiar. He is at one with the leading theologians of modern Germany—with Gess, with Thomasius, with Martensen, with Liebner, with Rothe, with Lange. Where Ebrard differs from these theologians is in a certain amount of diffidence in carrying out their conclusions. Nothing can exceed the strength of his language in describing the emptying process involved in the incarnation, but when he has completed it he seems to fear lest he may have gone too far. He asserts in the most unqualified terms that the Son of God becomes Son of Man by limiting the attributes of His Godhead into the attributes of humanity, but there he stops short. He will not admit that even when thus emptied, limited, denuded of His primeval majesty, the Son of Man loses for an instant the memorials of His former greatness, will not allow that even for an instant He ceases to be the Son of God; he insists upon the retention of that majesty which it has been the aim of the incarnation to destroy. The thought seems strikingly inconsistent, and in any other man than Ebrard it would be startlingly absurd. That the earthly Christ should at one and the same moment be great and lowly, Son of God and Son of Man, is intelligible enough in a theology which makes incarnation the addition of humanity to Divinity, but seems altogether unintelligible in a system where incarnation is the

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death of Divinity. Yet the absurdity will vanish if we call to mind Ebrard's remarkable doctrine that the personality lies behind the consciousness. Let us consider what is implied in this. It means that a man's consciousness may tell him only that he is poor and neglected, and that all the time the man himself by very reason of that consciousness may be a higher being than others who have a different mental experience. Do we not see this even in the common things of everyday life? Do we not find universally that a man becomes conscious of his darkness just in proportion as he himself is getting light, that he becomes sensitive to the night proportionate to the vividness with which he is surrounded by the day. A man who is awakened to spiritual unrest has a consciousness of greater poverty than the man who feels peace when there should be no peace; yet is it not clear that just on account of the sense of poverty the man himself has risen to a higher platform; the darkness visible on the outward stage is in the moral world a presumptive proof that the being behind the scenes is in a blaze of light. Starting from this human analogy, Ebrard is not afraid to construct in accordance with it the nature of the incarnate Son of God, for he regards the nature of the incarnate Son of God as itself the eternal pattern after which our human nature was fashioned. His perception of the great and the lowly in each individual act of the human soul has prepared him to see no mystery in the marriage of heaven and earth, to accept as a natural and normal thing the union in one person of the human and the Divine, and to recognise in the very cross of the Son of Man the resurrection-crown of the Son of God.

Let us see now how far we have advanced. The system of Ebrard has reconstructed the broken Trinity. It has exhibited in the person of Christ that tri-une harmony of nature which was lost in Adam; the human will has again power over the desires of the conscious soul and the forces of unconscious nature represented by the body. Is the system of Ebrard now completed? No; for all practical purposes it is only beginning. For the question is, What is this person of Christ to me? The restoration of the tri-une harmony in a solitary human soul would be nothing unless that soul ceased to be solitary, unless it became a part of my soul, and gave its perfections to my imperfections. Ebrard accordingly emphasises the necessity for regeneration, by which he means the birth of a new personality in man, the impartation to his life of the tri-une life of Christ. But it is just here that Ebrard begins to develop into the Scotch theologian, and startles us by his near approach to the Calvinistic theology. He regards regeneration as the final need of humanity, but he will not allow that regeneration is the first need. Man by his fall has become guilty, by which Ebrard means, has become liable to punishment. It is not enough to raise the soul into its former glory; an expiation must be made for the loss of past glory. The first work of the Son of Man must be to bear the penalty of the sons of men, before they are partakers of His righteousness, which can only come by regenera-

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tion; they must receive by His death a remission of punishment. The student will observe how near Ebrard here approaches to the Scotch theology. The Lutheran theology lays the chief stress upon Christ's *active* obedience; it contemplates rather what He has done than what He has suffered; the Calvinistic system is impressed at the outset with a weight of impending guilt, whose removal must be purchased by passive endurance. Ebrard is here decidedly more Calvinistic than Lutheran, and from the stand-point of Calvinism he has narrowly missed being an orthodox man. Yet he has missed it, and missed it in a way that in a man of his acuteness surprises us. It is the doctrine of Scotch theology that by the death of Christ a man is justified—that is to say, that he is counted just, pure, or holy. Ebrard will not admit this. A man, he says, can only be counted just when he is regenerated, when the Spirit of Christ becomes a part of his spirit. The death of Christ does not make him righteous, it simply sends him a reprieve; it does not reverse the verdict, it merely remits the penalty. One cannot but think how very easy it would have been for Ebrard to have built a bridge of connection between his own view and the view of the strictest Calvinism. He tells us that Christ's death does not remove the sin, but only the punishment of sin; but what if the punishment of sin is sin itself? This is the direct doctrine of Augustine, and Augustine is the spiritual father of Calvin. It is a mistake to suppose that any enlightened Scotch theologian regards the penalty of transgression as something which is arbitrary and external. If the lightning were to strike the murderer to the earth at the moment when he committed his crime, it might be a signal mode of indicating the Divine presence, but it would by no means indicate the Divine law of retribution. There is no connection between a flash of lightning and that malignant principle which produces murder; the one is external, the other is internal; they are not united by nature, they are simply tied together with a string. But there is a very deep connection between sin and sensuousness, and there is a connection not less direct between sensuousness and death. Every form of sin is a form of animal life, and it is the nature of the animal to die; here, at least, there is no discrepancy between geology and genesis. The human soul, by its choice of evil, stoops down into that life of nature which to it is not natural, and becomes heir to that death of nature which is not its hereditary birthright. There is no lightning flash, there is no sudden catastrophe, there is no artificial penalty, such as external courts of justice assign to particular offences, but there is the insertion into the soul of a corrupting, degenerative principle, whose contact is union with the beast of the field, and whose climax is death. It is vain, then, in a world of pure morality, to distinguish between the penalty and the cause of the penalty. Sin is a disease, and the punishment of sin is the consummation of the disease. To say that a man is counted free from punishment is, in the very nature of the case, identical with saying that he is counted free from sin. The remission of the sentence is in this

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sphere precisely the same process as would be produced on the soul by the reversal of the verdict, and the legal acquittal which makes the accused free from consequences is also the moral acquittal which makes him free from crime.

Ebrard now passes into what for him is firmer ground—the actual process of assimilation by which Christ becomes part of the soul. Regeneration, the second birth, the new man, the work of the Spirit, the sanctification of the life called by any name we will, has always been regarded as the most mysterious subject in the whole range of theological thought; yet it is this very mystery that constitutes from beginning to end the golden thread of Ebrard's system. We have seen lying at the very basis of that system the doctrine that there is a region behind the consciousness; a region where the human soul is subject to impressions of which itself is unaware; a region where man, as it were, lives in disguise from himself. We have seen how in this region the earthly nature of the Son of Man retained the memorials of His pristine majesty, while His outward consciousness was only that of sorrow and of pain; the very sense of pain and sorrow was the shadow of a glory in the past. We have now to see how the soul of every regenerated man is made to repeat the human experience of the Son of God. As the earthly glory of the Son of God lay behind His consciousness, so the work of His regenerating Spirit has also its place behind the consciousness of the believer. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. We cannot point to a golden moment of our past life and say, It was then the influence first laid hold on me; we can only say, It was then I first *felt* the influence lay hold on me. The moment of awakening into conscious feeling is at no time the beginning of a moral process; the mystery of purity, like the mystery of iniquity, must be a hidden life ere it can become a manifested fact. As the morning sun has already risen before to us it appears to rise, so in the system of Ebrard the new and higher light begins to dawn before the conscious powers of the soul have begun to see its appearing. There is a striking passage in the lectures of Sir William Hamilton, where the sober decision of the grave philosopher seems almost to coincide with the speculation of the imaginative theologian. He tells us that every object which we see is made up of an infinite number of atoms which are too small for sight; that every sound which we hear is composed of a myriad of sounds too faint to be perceived by any ear; the temple of the visible and the audible has been reared out of materials which are invisible and inaudible, and "the things which are seen are not made by the things which do appear." The authors of that remarkable work, "The Unseen Universe," have brought into the domain of science that principle which Ebrard has affirmed in theology, and which Hamilton has enunciated in philosophy. That work is based upon the conviction that the material world which we see and hear and touch depends for

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its very existence on the existence of an underlying world which eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor heart conceived ; and in the current number of the *Princeton Review* one of its authors has reaffirmed that conviction in the strongest possible terms. We mention these facts to show that the principle of Ebrard's work, which is of all others the most abstruse, is the principle which of all others has found most favour with the Scottish intellect. We do not wonder at this. There is about it a breath of John Knox's atmosphere. That I am more than I seem, that I am higher than I know, that there is within me a latent divine life which at the critical moment will drive me into victory, is the creed which made reformers, covenanters, puritans. It is the creed which at the present day underlies much of that dogged resolution inherent in the Scottish character, and explains much of that unflinching perseverance which usually works its way. It is true, no orthodox Scotch divine would for a moment accept Ebrard's definition of regeneration. With every Calvinist, to be regenerated is to be converted ; with Ebrard, regeneration is God's work, conversion is man's work. With every Calvinist, repentance is the fruit of the Spirit ; with Ebrard, it is but the willingness to receive the Spirit, it is only a secular change of mind, a consenting to turn round into the direction of the light. But if the German theologian has here yielded too much to the claims of the human will, let us remember that even the error leans to Calvin's side ; it is not because he wants less, but because he wants more from God than orthodoxy has ever promised. He is not content that regeneration should make him a converted man ; he desires to be made literally a new man. He is not content that the Spirit should give him faith in Christ ; he desires that the Spirit may give him Christ Himself, may place behind his consciousness a new self, a higher personality, a life born from above, so that he can literally say with Paul, "I live, yet not I, for Christ liveth in me."

These are the claims of Ebrard, these the desires of his spiritual nature. Perhaps it may be thought that if in his doctrine of incarnation he has emptied too much the Divine into the human, in his doctrine of regeneration he has emptied too much the human into the Divine. Be it so ; the inconsistency, if inconsistency there be, belongs not to Ebrard, it belongs to the German theology of the last hundred years. That theology has swayed to and fro beneath the influence of two mighty opposing currents—the rationalism which gives everything to man, and the pantheism which gives everything to God. Rationalism has had its day, and is nearly spent ; after long and strenuous efforts to build a tower that can reach unto heaven, the system of Paulus has been compelled to write this inscription on humanity, "Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting." The reaction has been swift and sweeping ; and, like all reactions, it has too much ignored the ingredients of latent truth that dwelt in the opposing system. Baffled in the attempt to make himself Divine, man has rushed into the extreme of

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denying himself to be human, and the coldness of a soulless rationalism has been exchanged for the mysticism of a bodiless pantheism. It is the aim of evangelical Germany to open up between these a golden road of mediation, to find that middle way which may unite the excellencies of each, while yet rejecting the extravagances of both. Ebrard dwells amidst the contending influences, and from each of them he has received a heritage. The dying rationalism has left him a sense of the glory of humanity; the dominant pantheism has filled him with a conviction of the nothingness of individual life. He will not accept the rationalism, he will not accept the pantheism, but he tries to find in Christianity the vindication of a truth which slumbers in them both. He sees the glory of man in the great fact of the incarnation; he beholds the nothingness of man in the great necessity for the regenerating Spirit. That he has succeeded in establishing a logical union of opposites we do not believe, that he has solved the mighty problem of human liberty and human necessity we cannot for a moment think; but in pointing to the fact that their solution lies in Christianity, he has assumed an attitude which indicates a new and higher bent of German religious thought, and directed us to an opening dawn which yet may be a summer day.

GEORGE MATHESON.

IS THE GOSPEL SPREADING IN ITALY?

IT has already become a stale historical fact that all Italy is now open to the preaching of the Gospel. But few who repeat the fact realise its magnitude. We may sometimes be too near events to take the true measure of their greatness. That, in a country with twenty-two millions of inhabitants, which for so many centuries had been sternly closed against the Word of God, whether read or preached, liberty of worship, of speech, and of printing is nearly as complete as mere law can make it, is a circumstance worthy of the historian and the Christian philanthropist to note and ponder over. Passing events are ever presenting the welcome fact in new forms. Not many months ago there was a sale of Bibles conducted in the most open and public manner in all the principal streets and thoroughfares of Rome, and the work went on unmolested as if it had been a sale of fruits or flowers. Only a few weeks since, when we were in Rome, an advertisement was posted over the streets of the city by one of the Waldensian pastors, to the effect, that on a certain evening he would give a lecture in his church on "Mary, the mother of God;" a dogma which he characterised in his advertisement in no measured terms. And no one among the public authorities disturbed or challenged him. The clerical newspapers, indeed, gnashed their teeth at him. Counter advertisements covered the walls

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in praise of the Virgin, and couched in language that was almost idolatrous. Pilgrimages were even taken to the principal shrines of Mary as a testimony against Signor Ribetti's challenge. But this was all. The lecture was delivered to a crowded audience of educated men. And not a hair of the bold controversialist's head was injured.

Every one knows that as soon as Italy was opened, the Waldenses, stepping forth from their mountain recesses, were the first to enter by that open gate which for so many dreary ages had been jealously barred against the simple faith of Christ. There was a divine fitness in the fact that, whoever might follow them, they should lead the van in the evangelisation of Italy, and hasten to pay back to the descendants of their fathers' persecutors the wrongs of centuries, by carrying to them the most precious boon of Heaven.

But those persons made a great mistake who imagined that when the Waldenses began to unfurl the banner of the Gospel in that beautiful land, they met with an expectant multitude, "a people made ready, prepared for the Lord." It was far otherwise. Italy was open, but, speaking generally, the hearts of the Italian people were not open. There were few who "waited for the consolation of Israel." Alike in the cities, and villages, and rural districts of the land, there were myriads wedded to their corrupt Church, clinging to it as the only ship of salvation which could bear them to heaven. And there were others who continued to be attracted by all those æsthetic agencies of music, and painting, and architecture, and gorgeous ceremonial, by which Popery, in all ages, has drawn to herself and kept around her many external votaries. And there were others still, who swelled her ranks from the influence of habit, without any deep convictions. And worse than all this, there was everywhere abounding in the midst of papal temples and institutions that infidelity which is always sooner or later born of superstition; and which, having been led to shake off faith in Popery, had shaken off faith in all things, and sunk into an apathy in respect to everything that was supernatural and spiritual, which was like a second death. The ashes which an extinct superstition leaves behind it do not strengthen the soil, but curse it, or bring forth only such plants as the deadly nightshade. The evangelist had, therefore, not only to do battle with a living superstition, but to arouse men out of an indifference which had lost its interest in everything but what was seen and temporal. It is necessary that prominence should be given to these facts even now, because there has been, on the part of many, an unreasoning impatience for immediate and widespread results, apparently expecting that all Italy, with its twenty-two millions of inhabitants, would be won to the simple faith in a few years. They forgot more than one of our Lord's prophetic pictures in His parables respecting the progress of His kingdom. And they forgot, also, the lessons of church history. For even in the first ages of the Church, with its young and buoyant life, the labours and prayers and martyr-

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doms of three centuries were needed to give Christianity a majority of disciples in the Roman empire, and even in Rome itself; and the Christian Church had actually entered on her fourth century before the renunciation of heathenism by a Roman emperor was celebrated on that noble arch of Constantine which still remains as one of the grandest specimens of architecture in the city of the Cæsars.

There are fifteen parishes within the valleys, with a proportionate number of pastors, and "regents" or schoolmasters who, through all their strangely eventful history, have stood in close connection with the pastors and with church work. The number of church members in those fifteen parishes is unusually large, amounting in all to 12,150, while the children in attendance on their Sabbath schools are 4,622. But, meanwhile, we shall leave behind us this native church among its mountains, with its shepherds, and goat-herds, and vinedressers, and workers in the fields among the chesnut and mulberry trees, living, as of old, upon "polenta" and rye-bread, and goat's milk, and we shall ask the question, What have they done, and how has it fared with them outside their homes in Italy, since, in considerably less than one generation, a great door of entrance was thrown open to them in part by the cunning hand of diplomacy, and in part by the bloody hand of war?

There are already thirty-nine Waldensian churches, and twenty-four principal stations scattered over Italy, and there are in addition sixty-four sub-stations, occasionally ministered to by ordained pastors, trained evangelists, or advanced students. So that, even now there is scarcely a city or principal town in the whole peninsula in which there is not a company of Christian disciples, the fruit of Waldensian evangelism, meeting in public every Lord's day for Christian worship. In connection with these, there are fifty-seven day schools and 103 Sunday schools, with one additional feature of great value and efficiency in the form of seven colporteurs. Thus, within their valleys and hemmed in by their mountains, there are fifteen parishes, with a nearly equal number of pastors, and these have succeeded in planting over Italy in less than twenty years, more than 112 churches and stations, with an attendance of regular worshippers that approaches to 5,000. In other words, the mission churches and centres of evangelism which they have planted within this brief period exceed, nine times over, the number of congregations in the mother church among the mountains. The little one has become a hundred. How rapidly is the martyr church, adapting itself to its new conditions, transforming itself into the missionary church.

In this brief statistical summary, we have referred to the large number of sub-stations that have been planted by the Waldensian Church in Italy. These are, in many instances, the hopeful germs of flourishing churches; and the manner in which some of them have been formed and fostered gives us pleasing insight into the way in which the kingdom of God is extending in Italy. Looking to the eastward

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from one of the eminences in Rome over a distance of eighteen or twenty miles, you see the Sabine and Alban Hills with picturesque villages like Frascati and others nestling upon their sides. In the afternoon of every Lord's day, a young minister, after having preached in the morning in the Waldensian Church in Rome, and travelled partly by rail and partly on foot, preaches in a private apartment, probably a kitchen in one of those villages, to a congregation of between twenty and thirty people. Not long since those hearers were Roman Catholics, but they have come to know the Gospel of Divine love, and in their appreciation of this knowledge, have faced the consequences of breaking their connection with the Church of Rome. But there is also a little audience outside the apartment, and through chinks in the door the word of life has found its way to the hearts of some of the timid listeners and has made them brave. One hearer brings another, and so the little company grows and is consolidated into a regularly organised Church of Christ.

It is not long since another Waldensian congregation came into existence in this wise. In a village, in the Province of Barri, south from Naples, a tradesman belonging to the Roman Catholic Church, who for many years had possessed a copy of the Bible which he had never read, was at length persuaded by a letter from a friend to take it down from its dust-laden shelf and read it. He soon became deeply interested, and induced some of his neighbours to come and read it along with him. One after another joined the little circle to hear the wonderful book and to converse about it, until at length about forty of them severed their connection with the Church of Rome, and invited Signor Pons, the Waldensian pastor, to come down from Naples and visit them. After having been dealt with as catechumens for some months, and "instructed in the way of the Lord more perfectly," they were formed into a Christian church, and are now regularly ministered to by an evangelist from the Waldensian mission.

In connection with the flourishing Church of the Waldenses at Messina, in Sicily, there are no fewer than seven stations, each with its little band of tried and faithful disciples. These stretch along the western shores of the island, and are superintended and visited at intervals by Signor Malan the eloquent pastor of the Messina Church. Among these are the stations of Catania, Caltanizetta, and the more than classic Syracuse where Paul landed from the Alexandrian corn-ship on his way to Rome, and "tarried for three days." The journals of the fearless and adventurous pastor of Messina, some of which we have seen, almost equal in interest the earlier missionary stories of the South Seas.

Facts like these are sufficient to show how groundless is the representation which has so often been made, that the Waldensian workers in Italy minister chiefly to natives of their own valleys who have migrated for employment to some of the Italian towns or villages. The

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representation is baseless and untrue. Their work is a mission of Italians to Italians. On inquiry, we found that the proportion of Waldenses in any of the congregations was comparatively small, and that the preponderating majority of their members were converts from the Roman Catholic Church, or from an indifference which was rooted in a universal scepticism. We learned also that in their large Sabbath schools—some of them exceeding in number 200 scholars—not more than ten in every hundred were the children of Waldensian parents. They are telling in every region upon the superstition and unbelief of Italy itself.

There are many claims which this Waldensian Church has upon the confidence and affection of the Protestant Churches of Christendom. We throw aside in our estimate of them, all reference to the historic interest and glory which hangs around them as the children of those who kept the light of the true "evangel" burning brightly, when every other part of Europe was shrouded in murky superstition, and we are content to refer to the character of the existing Church and of the living men. They continue faithful in their adherence to that apostolic truth which made their fathers the holy men and good confessors they were, though they do not adhere to mere stereotyped forms of words, but express their convictions in the living language of their own age. Then their pastors are all thoroughly educated men, obliged first to pass through several years of classical and scientific training, and then of theological instruction in their Divinity School at Florence, to undergo at intervals sifting examinations on the subjects of their studies, and to satisfy the Synod in respect to their personal religion, before they are sent forth as evangelists, or ordained as pastors. Then their pastors who are men of high Christian character, maintain, along with their elders, a systematic and watchful inspection and discipline over their congregations, and even their simple and popular Presbyterian order and polity naturally increases, at least among Presbyterians, their sense of affinity and attraction towards them. The evangelistic spirit, too, is growing rapidly among them, and is sending out their younger ministers to markets and fairs and other places of public concourse, to make earnest aggression upon the ignorance, superstition, and grovelling materialism which still make so many parts of that beautiful land as "the region and shadow of death."

We are writing of the Waldenses alone, but nothing can be more opposed to our every intention and feeling than to insinuate that they are the only trustworthy labourers for Christ's Gospel and kingdom in Italy. Let us at least name a few others. The "*Chiesa Libera*," or Free Church of Italy, was originally formed of some congregations which had sprung up in various parts of the land through the reading of the Bible. These congregations, moved by a desire of forming themselves into an ecclesiastical body, met in Assembly in 1855, but it was only in 1870 that they succeeded in formulating a confession of faith. In their earlier years they were often charged with having Plymouthist

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elements among them, with political preferences too strongly pronounced, and with being without any very definite rule and order, but they seem to have been gradually working themselves clear of these imperfections, and are now holding an honourable place among the evangelic Churches of reviving Italy.

The Chiesa Libera has twenty congregations and stations, with an aggregate membership of 1649. It has a college in Rome, beautifully situated on the banks of the Tiber; and its theological school consists of twelve students, some of whom, however, are only as yet in their preparatory course of instruction such as is given in our own grammar schools. There are three professors, one of whom is the well-known Father Gavazzi.

No foreign Church has shown such a deep interest in the evangelisation of Italy from the day in which it was thrown open to the Gospel as the Wesleyan Methodists. Already it has forty-one churches and stations, superintended, according to their accustomed organisation, from two centres, the one in Rome, and the other in Naples. The individual congregations must as yet be small, since with forty-one churches and stations, the entire church-membership has not yet quite reached 1000. But this proves that they do not, like some Churches, wait to be sent for, but "go" according to their Lord's commission; and with their admirable and scriptural system of making every member of their Church a worker, there is no telling how extensively Wesleyanism may yet spread over the peninsula and bless it. One sphere of Christian action has been discovered by the Wesleyans, and has been wrought with characteristic energy as well as with most gratifying success, and this is among the soldiers in Rome. Signor Capellini one of the Wesleyan pastors, holds weekly meetings with the soldiers. His audience, entirely composed of military men, usually consists of seventy or eighty. As the regiments change, his old hearers are removed, but it is found that others come from the new regiments in equal numbers. And as the statutory period of service for the Italian soldier is only three years, after which he is free to return to his home and his usual avocations, it is pleasing to think how many of them may carry away in their hearts some living truths to their homes in the mountains of Calabria or upon the vine-covered slopes of the Appenines, and become evangelists in their turn, cottage missionaries, and good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

There are already sixteen Baptist congregations in Italy, nine of which are "strict communion Baptists," and seven hang out the flag of open communion; there are fifteen congregations taking the designation of Episcopal Methodists, which appear to have won many converts among the higher classes; there are eight congregations of the Fratelli, or "the Brethren," whose name indicates their denominational position; and there are others few in number and whose names are new to us. One is apt to regret these sectional differences, and that our evangelical Protestantism should have appeared before awakening Italy, and in the

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presence of the external unity of the Papal Church in its very citadel and stronghold, in such a coat of many colours. But let there be earnest working on the part of all, a readiness to recognise each other's usefulness, to avoid and live above all denominational jealousies, to dwell together in a brotherly fellowship, and the evil will be temporary, and there will be found ample room and work for all, and ample opportunity to make manifest to all their unity in diversity.

Is the Gospel, then, under the efforts of these Waldensian missionaries and other agencies really spreading to any appreciable extent in Italy? We answer with an unhesitating affirmative, Yes. But the emblem of its progress is not to be found in the lustral fire rapidly consuming and purifying everything before it, or even in the quickly advancing tide, but rather in our Lord's own prophetic parable of the woman hiding her leaven in the three measures of meal, and this silent power extending and assimilating, often without human knowledge or observation, until the whole is leavened. We count their gains only by units. We cannot yet exclaim with gladdened surprise, "Who are these that fly like doves unto their windows?" much less can we dare to speak of nations or provinces as being born unto God in a day. But while it is not yet summer, it is no longer winter. It is spring; and spring is the season of hope and the precursor and the prophecy of harvest. Looked at from a religious point of view, there are three factors at work in Italy at the present moment—Popery, infidelity, and the evangelical faith. The first of these is visibly decaying and disintegrating; the second, which in Italy is in a great measure a reaction from the first, will be transient, and men in their hours of sorrow and soul-hunger will look around them for something to rest on and to live upon; the third, which meets all the true wants of man's soul, will yet be welcomed by the heart of Italy. We may gather confirmation to much that we have now said, from the nervous alarm and excitement that have been produced among the rulers of the Roman Church by the labours of modern evangelists. The recent encyclical letter of the new Pope expresses this alarm, with special reference to the Protestant and Government schools, and proposes to gather a great fund for the purpose of resisting and counteracting them. Then, it is a fact that the great middle class of Italy is alienated in heart and soul from the Papacy. The aristocracy still cling to it as a part of the old glory which has departed. But the practical, thinking, middle class has done with Romanism. It once feared it; it now hates it, and it will soon despise it. How is it that men cannot be found in sufficient numbers to be educated as priests, or to occupy the vacant places as curés in the parishes? Then the comments of the shrewder onlookers in the public press show that they regard the Papacy as doomed and dying, and the new Gospel as having a great future before it. These are suggestive sentences from a recent number of the Italian *Diritto*:—"The work of evangelisation, whether it be acknowledged or denied, according to the views one is led to take by passion, prejudice,

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or narrow political views, is a fact in Italy. Not only is it a fact, but it is daily extending its roots, and though slow, yet is it making progress and gaining ground. This is a fact, a social truth. As such, it ought to be studied and weighed in its actual importance, which no one can deny, but yet more in its future results. In days when numbers and statistics are sworn by, and are believed to be the great and decisive factors of the destinies of men and of societies, a movement like this, in which so many forces take part, cannot be overlooked."

Hundreds of priests and many higher dignitaries of the Church of Rome are dissatisfied and uneasy in their positions, because they have lost their faith in much that is essential to Popery, and they only cling to their connection because they have not moral strength and courage enough to risk, and even to renounce, all for Christ and conscience. And few are more convinced than they that the young evangelical life of Italy, feeble though it may yet seem, is a living power in the land, and that its feebleness is that of the sapling tree which, as it grows and expands, will split the rock in pieces.

Italy filled with the light of the Gospel! Italy subject to the gentle yoke of Christ! When its great politicians and statesmen at Florence were assembled in their grand hall of judgment three centuries ago, and disputing as to who should be their king, their great Reformer, Savonarola, rushed into the midst of them, and holding up an image of the Saviour, exclaimed, "Jesus Christ is your King!" "Jesus Christ is your King!" This is what Italy needs for her stability, her prosperity, her freedom, her true greatness. And it is coming. Then will the glories of pagan Rome with her emperors and her armies, and of mediæval Italy with her painters and sculptors and poets, pale before the higher and divine glory of an Italy that bows before the sceptre of the King of kings. "Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed 'Forsaken,' neither shall thy land any more be termed 'Desolate;' but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married."

ANDREW THOMSON.

LIBERAL AUSTRIA.

IT is a striking feature of the policy of modern Austria, that while she issues the most liberal laws with the most wonderful ease and plausibility—laws that to foreigners appear quite dazzling—her tardiness and scurviness in executing them are equally notorious to those at home. Austria is one thing in theory, but in practice quite another. I do not advert to the laws for her nationalities—a great boon in an empire with such a variety of peoples as Austria; nor to the laws regulating associations, public meetings, liberty of the press, and so forth, for these in

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reality have little to do with the masses ; nor are they so hollow as to have no resemblance to what they pretend to be. I will restrict my remarks to the subject of liberty of conscience and worship, granted and guaranteed to every Austrian subject by fundamental laws, dating from 1868.

There was a time when a convert had endless difficulties in leaving one Church and joining another, especially if he was a Roman Catholic. To leave the Protestant Church was regarded as the result of a special act of grace of the Holy Ghost ; but a desire to leave the Roman Church was considered a trick of the devil, to be opposed by all sacerdotal means, both spiritual and temporal. For six weeks the convert was obliged to attend a course of religious instruction by his priest. He was overwhelmed by a flood of maledictions and reproaches ; he became the scandal of the whole parish ; was entangled by sophistry and lured by promises ; and if he persevered through all this, he was indeed like gold tried in many a fire. Sometimes he was passed from one priest to another, and the six weeks lengthened out into as many years. There was a member of my own congregation who, for eighteen years, was prevented from entering the Protestant Church ! He had been declared insane, and sent to an asylum. Then he was put in jail, and kept there till the stormy year 1848 set him at liberty. This state of things is now abolished, and the change from one Church to another is accomplished through a written declaration, which has to be forwarded from the State Office to the respective parishes. Sometimes it happened that a scrupulous office-clerk required a medical certificate of the sanity of the proselyte, if he were leaving the Romish Church ; but this also is now done away with. By-and-by, however, there arose a new and unexpected difficulty.

Many persons leave one Church and do not at once join another. These are called "Confessionless." Some of them are indifferent to any confession of faith, but many are sincerely religious, and keep aloof from the existing Churches, for reasons manifold and just. Now, a fundamental law, granting and guaranteeing liberty of conscience and worship, in a land boasting of liberty, would surely allow the worshippers to form a special community, as long as their tenets did not interfere with, or damage the interests of public morals, and the safety of the State ; or if they did not care about an outward organisation, the law would leave them at liberty to observe such rites and forms of worship in their own houses and families as they chose, provided that in every other respect they conformed to the law. There is no difficulty in the way of the State making sure, by means of its commissioners, that that condition is observed. This would surely be a just and fair way of dealing in any liberal and constitutional State ; but with us it is a mere theory. Logic would seem to assure us that the legislators must have expected such occurrences, and formed the law to protect the people ; but the administrators of the law seem to consider any such thing an unheard-of

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ecclesiastical anomaly, and they act accordingly under motives inspired by the rules of the Concordat. In spite of the fundamental laws of 1868, these confessionless Christians are still virtually ruled by the laws of 1854, or rather by the arbitrary mood of any judge, or the priest-ridden conscience of any political official; if indeed the procedure against them be not dictated, as is very probable, by the higher authorities.

In a previous communication I adverted to the suppression of measures of evangelisation in some important places, and to the Oberkirchenrath's acquiescence in the steps taken for that purpose by the political officers. Notwithstanding, the slight efforts to disseminate the truth thus arrested have not been in vain. The parties complained of were especially the American brethren, whose labours had been crowned with success, and whose recent persecution startled even our own press, unfavourable though it be to religious movements. These brethren, being isolated and cut off from our Church by the intolerance of some conceited persons who, without the consent of the Church, happen to be clothed with ecclesiastical authority, lectured in a hall in Prague under the surveillance of the police, who gave them tickets for the admission of their hearers. They were instructed not to build altar upon altar, but to leave their converts at liberty to join whichever Protestant church best agreed with their convictions. As persons who had been taught the Reformed doctrine, they could not follow the Lutherans; and as believing Christians, they shunned the vulgar rationalism of the Reformed pastor of Prague. Being also forbidden to avail themselves of the ministry of neighbouring believing pastors, they resolved to form themselves into a Presbyterian congregation, and to ask the licence and recognition of the State, remaining "confessionless" meanwhile, in order to avoid the ministry of the pastor of Prague.

In the western half of Austria, which has recently received the queer designation of Cislythania, the Churches are divided into two classes—the authorised, or recognised, and the non-recognised. To the authorised belong the Roman Church, the Greek, the Lutheran, and the Reformed, the Unitarians and the Jews. In the list of non-recognised there are none, although the law has been in existence for many years, and some communities, like the Moravians, the Free Reformed Church, and the Friends, have tested it, with a view to avail themselves of its protection. The Government seems to be at a loss what to do, since the central offices of these communities being abroad, were beyond its reach and control (although it does not thus shy the Vatican in Italy); it therefore allowed the petitions to lie unnoticed among its archives.

Much curiosity was excited as to what the issue would be, and at last the governor cut the Gordian knot at a stroke, intimating to the applicants that, as the Presbyterian religion did not exist in Austria, it could neither be recognised, nor non-recognised.

Now, there is a general prejudice among us, a sad remnant of past times, that anything that has not the two letters K. K. (Königlich-

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Kaiserlich,—Royal-Imperial) prefixed to it is worthless. Our church constitution is very often styled Presbytero-Synodical, but the K. K. Oberkirchenrath figures in front of it, which gives it a quite different look. It is no easy matter to obtain the K. K., but whatever body possesses it is not suspected. Well, whether or not the absence of the K. K. and the term "synodical" was the reason of the denial that a Presbyterial body existed, does not matter, but the result was that the *Confessionless* were thrown back upon the tender mercies of the police, who, it is true, rather favoured them. The lectures went on in Prague, and the seed spread to some villages in the neighbourhood. Several respectable Roman Catholic families received the Gospel, and met for prayer and reading the Scripture, when suddenly there sprang up rumours of a new sect, called Wupperthalers or Trvingists, and the prefect was ordered by higher authorities, who identified those Confessionless with these imagined sects, to watch them. He sent gendarmes to be present at their meetings, but after several visits these had nothing to report but the prayers and earnest behaviour of the dangerous sectarians. "What do you think of them?" asked the prefect. "Well," answered the men, "we think that if we attend their meetings much longer we shall be tempted to join them ourselves." Nevertheless, these honest people were three times fined £5 each, were threatened by the prefect with the official sale of their property and reduction to beggary should they continue to—pray; and continuing to pray, they were at last tried and imprisoned for *riot*, although it was clearly proved that they had done nothing but prayed in their own houses!

When they were released, they remained under the surveillance of the police, and soon after, a most outrageous scene took place in the house of one of them named Joseph Hodek. He was conducting family worship; his servants were present; his wife, recently confined, was holding the baby in her arms; and two other children, of two and five years old, were sitting at her feet. They had just sung a hymn, when a gendarme entered. Taking a chair, he listened for a while, and then stood up and commanded the servants to leave the room. They refused to obey, and he, getting into a rage, snatched the hymn-book from the hands of Hodek, and throwing it on the floor, reproached him in vile terms for seducing the people to heresy. Hodek mastered himself, and asserted his right to praise God with his own household, according to his conscience, and said the gendarme would be better employed looking after thieves and drunkards. At these words the gendarme pointed his bayonet at the breast of Hodek, and threatened to stab him if he uttered another word. The screams of the women and children prevailed at last, and the prop of public morals, and safety of the State, retired. Mrs. Hodek was taken dangerously ill, and narrowly escaped death. Hodek's complaints were received with deaf ears.

Soon afterwards, two other fathers of families—Joseph Prokhaska and Vatzlaf Pospishil—were fined £4 each, with the option of eight days'

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imprisonment, for holding family worship. They appealed to the highest authorities, but the sentence was confirmed. The public journals registered these facts, and public opinion shook its head. By way of apology, the governor issued a decision to the effect that the liberty of conscience granted by the fundamental laws of 1868, was just the same as that granted by the severe laws of 1854, drawn out under the influence of the Vatican—namely, that what was allowed was *mere family worship*. If even servants were present, or any meeting were held, though with the sanction of the police, the law was violated! Thus the liberty of conscience granted in 1868 is mere ink and paper. Still, something was gained, but what was gained in one way was lost in another, for the hall in Prague was shut, and meetings held in some private houses were dispersed.

Thus, thanks to the law granting liberty of conscience, Bohemia is shorn of that liberty, and is purged from heresy! If this were done by a fanatical mob, we should consider it a sin of ignorance and superstition; but when done by men who claim for themselves the attributes and merits of liberal reformers, call themselves founders of a new era, and organs of a liberty which "even the English envy us,"—a winged word often repeated in the ministerial journals—we must pray to be rid of their hypocrisy. A liberty of conscience which knocks down the convert, and treats him like a felon, is after the fashion of Turkish civilisation, that inflicts capital punishment on a Moslem when he embraces Christianity. There is, indeed, an article in our laws prohibiting "Proselytenmacherei" (proselytising), but its purport has not as yet been explained by a judge. But, nevertheless, its existence is a restriction on our liberties.

Bohemia is indeed a favoured land. She is the stay of Austria; her industry and finances sustain the empire, she is its only active kingdom; but foreigners are often struck by the sad expression on her face. Of course you have liberty of conscience there, but don't let any one see or know what you believe; you have liberty of the press, but don't let any one read what you write; you have liberty of speech, but don't let any one hear what you say. Bohemia is to remain in the thralldom of Popery. The suppression of Mr Laveleye's pamphlet "On the Influence of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism upon Nations" is a clear proof of this. The pamphlet went quite freely through the Hungarian, the German, and the Italian press; but in Bohemia it was seized, while yet wet from the printer's hands. A committee for the erection of a monument to John Huss in Prague, was told by the governor that "because public beneficence is so much appealed to, it would be, &c., and therefore it cannot be allowed." But should any one wish to collect money to put a picture into a Roman Catholic Church, the governor, an admirer of this kind of art, would certainly be the first to subscribe, as his wife, in imitation of Lady Macmahon, held the plate at the doors of the churches of Prague to collect money for the late poor Pope.

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Strenuous efforts are made to keep the light of history under a bushel. It is sad to see the school-books of our national history which are published by the Government. They are more like lives of the saints, and periods of centuries are playfully passed over to save the youth from *truth*! A lecture on Saint René Taillandier, the warm-hearted friend of Bohemia and her Protestant heroes, was interdicted, and so on *ad infinitum*. We cannot but conclude that in spite of the written liberty of conscience, the standard in religious questions is still the popish idea of church unity. We will affirm nothing, but many things seem to indicate an opinion, that there are already more Churches in Austria than necessary, and that it is time to crop the desire of organising any new ones, if it be not better to hoist all at once the old maxim of Ferdinand II., and have again but one—the Roman Church. To others, if they have done with their existence, a full liberty, without the slightest curtailment, can then easily be granted. Some are inclined to regard this severity towards the Confessionless as a protection favourable to the Protestant Churches. But this is a palpable error. These Churches are protected only so long as they keep silent and motionless.

In Brünn, for instance, there are about 400 Reformed Protestants. The pastor to whose parish they belong received permission from the K. K. Oberkirchenrath and the Government to appoint a vicar for that place. The day of his institution had arrived, and the congregation had assembled, when the governor stopped the proceedings, on his own responsibility, and the place remains vacant to this hour. The General Synod and the Oberkirchenrath both investigated the case, and found the governor's action illegal; they appealed to the Government for redress, but eighteen months have passed, and they have had no answer!

There is an interesting passage in the Memoirs of the renegade, William Count Slavata, who, in consequence of his interpretation of religious liberty, was compelled to take an involuntary leap from the windows of the Castle of Prague, and afterwards had much influence in Vienna. It runs thus—"The most subtle of the Bohemian heretics are those of the Unity of Brethren, who imbibed the poison of Calvin. At first, following the usual custom of the Calvinists, they ask permission to be set free in their consciences, and to believe in peace what the Lord God allows them to recognise. Having got this, they endeavour to obtain permission to hold public worship, and succeeding in this, they do not rest till they have equal rights with the Catholics, and have as many churches as they. Then they aspire to more power than the Catholics, and being successful, they persecute the true believers, and refuse to allow them to build churches, saying that their religion is idolatry. In the year 1619, they had carried things to a great length in Bohemia, but the Lord had compassion on that country, and did not allow this to continue long." We are afraid that the shadow of this Jesuit and malicious assertion still hovers about the ante-rooms of our influential men, for whenever things become earnest we hear the

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words that "God did take care not to allow the brushwood to grow unto heaven."

At the instigation of the above-mentioned pastor of Prague, a *protégé* of the Oberkirchenrath, the Government seized our Heidelberg catechism, and erased the last sentence of the 80th question in all the copies used in the public schools. They said the words breathed intolerance; but if the Calvinists complain of their children being compelled to pray to saints, they are told they must follow the majority. Who in Austria is to be trained up to liberty? The Government say it is the people!

With such a host of inveterate prejudices has the Gospel in Bohemia to fight; but we are patient. No doubt there is a sad chaos of principles; true liberty is but in germ among us, but some propitious time will hatch the egg. It will cost many a hard struggle, but we do not despair of the final issue. Looking back to those days when our fathers "had carried things to a great length in Bohemia," and then to the time when the cold dark night of persecution fell upon our beloved land, and laid her prostrate, bleeding, helpless, and the victim of numberless birds of prey, we yet remember that she recovered notwithstanding, and is yet undevoured; and these rough days we are now undergoing seem to our eyes as sunshine, and the fact that His people are persecuted for the truth's sake is the best proof of our merciful Lord's presence and love.

The precious and glorious Gospel will yet ring from Giant mountains over the Bohemian forest; and its glorious sound will yet cheer the banks of the Elbe and the Moldau, if only we pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to kindle in hearts the love of Jesus.

V. DUSÉK.

THE FOUR GOSPELS AND THE PULPIT.

THE practice of lecturing consecutively through whole books of Scripture is one which has heretofore honourably distinguished the Presbyterian pulpit, and it is to be hoped that it will continue to do so, for it is fitted in a high degree to promote, among the general body of Christians, an intelligent acquaintance with the sacred writings. Among the books which have received special attention from preachers, especially in recent times, are the precious records of our Lord's life, the four gospels. As these gospels repeat substantially the same story, the first three so closely resembling each other as to make it possible to classify them together as one group under the title of the Synoptical Gospels, a practical question arises, which each preacher has to decide for himself—viz., On what method may the material contained in these records most advantageously be made available for the instruction and edification of the Church? Different methods commend themselves to different

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minds, and perhaps it is best that all methods should be tried. Some lecture right through the gospels, beginning with Matthew, then taking up in succession Mark, Luke, and John, necessarily repeating themselves, to a large extent, as they deal successively with each gospel in turn, and probably by that very repetition promoting the end of all preaching, the growth of hearers in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Others prefer to regard the four gospels as a common source, and to deal with the materials on a plan which involves the distribution of them under certain general heads, and which may lead to the selection of a text from one gospel on one week and from another the next. Thus the ministry of our Lord has sometimes been considered under the following three heads:—His work as an evangelist, His conflict with unbelief, and His work as a Master training His disciples for the duties of the Apostolate,—all that relates to each of these topics being gathered indiscriminately from the four gospels, and considered in such order as seemed most conducive to a connected view of the subject. Yet again a third class of preachers would probably prefer to select a particular gospel, and to say all that they have to say on the life of Christ in connection with a continuous exposition of the gospel selected. When this method is resolved on, the question at once arises—Which of the four is it to be? and to answer this question satisfactorily one must make himself acquainted with the characteristics of each gospel, so as to know what uses and advantages each yields. We propose in this paper to afford some assistance to clerical readers in the prosecution of this inquiry. Our remarks will relate chiefly to the synoptical gospels.

1. In proceeding to point out the characteristics of these three gospels we notice first the designs which their respective writers seem to have had in view.

There can be little doubt that Matthew's aim was to exhibit Jesus to the Jewish people as the Christ in whom the promises to David and Abraham were fulfilled, and the hopes awakened by Messianic prophecies realised. His gospel is emphatically a gospel to the *Hebrews*. The very first sentence shows this—"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham." Here are implied three assertions—that Jesus is the Christ, that He is the Messianic King who should sit on the throne of David, and that in Him is fulfilled the promise to Abraham—"In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." The evangelist takes every opportunity of pointing out to his readers how this or that prophetic oracle has been fulfilled by some incident in the life of Jesus, as if with express intent to lead them to the conclusion that He is indeed the Christ. The Sermon on the Mount supplies still further evidence of the same position. In that sermon Jesus defines His relation to the law and the prophets in a manner which can be acquiesced in only by such as are prepared to receive Him as the Christ. In placing the sermon so near the beginning of his gospel, the first evangelist shows how near it lies to his heart to present Jesus to

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readers familiar with the law and the prophets, as the great subject to whom both pointed. By these and many kindred signs the first gospel is shown to be a *Hebrew* gospel. Not, however, in the Ebionitic sense of the term. The gospel, while written principally for *Jews*, is not *Judaistic*. The first evangelist is in full sympathy with the universalism of Paul—that is to say, he regards the gospel as a gift of God to the world at large, and the kingdom of God as one whose gates are open to all comers, from east, west, north, south. In proof of this it is sufficient to point once more to the superscription—"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, *the son of Abraham*." The last words are significant. They hint the truth—salvation is *of* the Jews, but not *alone for* the Jews. In Abraham's seed all nations were to be blessed, and lo ! here is the seed through whom the promise is to be fulfilled !

Luke's aim, to speak of him before Mark, was to put in the forefront the truth to which Matthew assigned the second place—viz., that the gospel is for mankind. That Jesus is the Christ, and that in Him all Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled, are truths by no means overlooked by this evangelist ; but his specific and chief purpose is not to proclaim these truths, but rather to hold up Jesus to view as the Hope and Saviour of the world. His gospel is a gospel for the *Gentiles*. Very significant in this connection is the manner in which Luke's genealogy of Jesus is constructed. Beginning with Joseph, the reported father of Jesus, it runs back, not to David merely, or even to Abraham, but to *Adam*, the first man, the father of the whole human race—"the son of Adam, which was the son of God." "Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God, a Saviour for all the sons of men, and giving to all who believe in His name in every land power to become sons of God ;" such is the programme suggested by the closing links of the genealogical table. And the evangelist never loses sight of his programme as he proceeds with the narrative of Christ's ministry in word and deed. In using his literary sources—the gospelets to which he alludes in his preface—he ever has an eye to materials fitted to exhibit the universal destination of Christianity, introducing here a story showing Christ as the friend of publicans and sinners, who were as heathens to orthodox Jews, there an incident which took place on Samaritan ground, and proved that a people with whom Jews had no dealings had a place in the Son of Man's heart ; in another part of his narrative recording a parable which shows that salvation is of grace,—therefore for all, Jews and Gentiles alike, on the same footing.

Mark's gospel, in comparison with Matthew's and Luke's, appears neutral and colourless, without definite purpose or tendency, a mere chronicle of facts in Christ's ministry, and even in that respect far from complete. On closer consideration, however, it will be found that the second gospel is not so aimless as it seems. It, too, as well as Luke's, is a gospel for Gentiles. It introduces its great subject as Jesus Christ

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the Son of God, and it presents in the sequel a narrative fitted to lead Gentiles to see in Jesus a Being possessed of Divine power. This gospel contains a very small portion of Christ's *teaching*; the Sermon on the Mount is wholly wanting. Only a few of the parables are given. Mark confines himself very much to the miraculous deeds wrought by Jesus, and he relies on these to produce the desired impression. Through these narratives he holds up Jesus as the true and only Son of God, endowed with Divine might and dignity, in opposition to the spurious sons of the gods worshipped by Pagans. It is, indeed, not very obvious why, assuming this to have been his design, he should have given such a one-sided prominence to the acts of our Lord, as distinct from His discourses. Why not exhibit Jesus to the Pagan world as at once divinely powerful and divinely wise? Nay, would it not have served his purpose better to have emphasised the latter attribute rather than the former, for while the Jews required a sign, the Greeks sought after wisdom? The question is one which suggests itself to every thoughtful reader, and it has not been overlooked by the critics. Renan says: "The part which Mark has taken in abridging so singularly the great discourses of Jesus astonishes one. These discourses could not be unknown to him; if he has omitted them, he must have had some reason for so doing. The spirit of Peter, a little narrow and dry, is perhaps the cause of the suppression. That same spirit is certainly the explanation of the importance which Mark attaches to the miracles. The thaumaturgy in his gospel has a singular character of dull materialism, which makes one think of the dreams of magnetisers." Renan goes on to remark that such features were likely to commend the second gospel to that portion of Pagan society for which it was specially intended—viz., the *Roman* world. While the Greeks sought after wisdom, the Romans had an even greater relish for the thaumaturgic than had the Jews themselves. "The miracles of Vespasian are conceived exactly in the same style as those of Jesus in the gospel of Mark. A blind or a lame man stops him in a public place, and prays him to heal him. He heals the one by spitting on his eyes, the other by stepping on his limb!" * More weight is to be attached to the view of a German critic, who accounts for the absence of the didactic element from Mark's gospel by the considerations that the speciality about Jesus was not that he was a Rabbi, but that He was the Messiah, and that to prove the latter position miracles were of more importance than wise sayings. "Had Jesus," this author remarks, "been nothing more than a great Jewish teacher, the only records concerning Him would have been a collection of *logia*; at most, along with His sayings would have been combined the anecdotes which explained the occasion of their utterance. But Jesus was from the first more than this to His followers; He was to them the Messiah whom God had shown to be such by His deeds. And so arose the problem not only to preserve His wise words, but also His deeds, and through the latter to justify faith in His person,

* *Les Evangiles*, pp. 117, 118.

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and this was the proper gospel, the gospel of the apostolic mission." * The second gospel had for its object to supply this proof, and in the fact that it confines itself to this task, and to a large extent omits the words of Jesus, the author in question finds clear evidence of its very early origin.

2. A second respect in which there is a marked difference between the synoptical evangelists is their respective methods of arranging their materials. This remark applies more particularly to Matthew and Luke. Matthew's method is to group the materials, whether sayings or doings, in masses; presenting the doctrine of Jesus in discourses of considerable extent, and giving us, in at least one instance, a bundle of miracles as samples illustrative of His Divine power.† His gospel contains some eight discourses of a more or less continuous character: the Sermon on the Mount concerning the righteousness of the kingdom, chaps. v.-vii.; the discourse on apostolic tribulations, given in connection with the Galilean mission of the twelve, chap. x.; the discourse arising out of the doubting message of the Baptist, "Art thou He that should come?" in which Jesus at once judged his contemporaries and indicated His estimate of Himself, chap. xi.; the discourse concerning blasphemy against the Son of Man and against the Holy Ghost, and the doom of those who were guilty of these sins, and especially of the latter, chap. xii.; the parabolic discourse on the nature of the kingdom, chap. xiii.; the discourse on humility and kindred virtues, chap. xviii.; the great anti-Pharisaical discourse delivered towards the close of the public ministry, chap. xxiii.; and the eschatological discourse in chaps. xxiv., xxv.

Luke's method of recording Christ's teachings is occasional rather than systematic. He disperses what Matthew collects into bundles, and scatters over his pages like pebbles on a gravel bank in a watercourse words of wisdom, which in Matthew's gospel we find arranged in groups like precious stones in a museum. I do not here discuss the question which of the two evangelists comes nearer to the historical order; I simply note the fact as one to which the student of our Lord's teaching must give heed. It is a fact which can hardly escape the notice of even the most cursory reader.

3. But much more important than the method of arrangement is the subject-matter of the sections relating to the doctrinal teaching of Christ contained in the several gospels. In this respect Matthew and Luke have marked idiosyncrasies very intimately connected with the distinctive aims of their gospels, as intended respectively for Hebrew and for Gentile readers. The Hebrew gospel of Matthew presents the teaching of Christ under a theocratic aspect; the Gentile gospel of Luke exhibits those teachings with features less severe—more gracious and attractive. The kingdom and its righteousness are the great themes in the one gospel; the free grace of God to the sinful is the favourite theme of the

* Weitzäcker, *Untersuchungen über die Evangelischen Geschichte*, p. 115.

† Chaps. viii., ix.

other. Not that Luke does not present Christ as speaking of the kingdom: the doctrine of the kingdom is as prominent in his pages as in those of Matthew. It is in the aspect under which the kingdom is presented that his peculiarity lies. While Matthew emphasises the righteousness of the kingdom, as in the Sermon on the Mount, the main design of which is to set forth the true nature of righteousness; Luke emphasises the grace of the kingdom. The difference between the two is not one of principle, but of proportion; for both evangelists present both aspects, only not with the same degree of prominence. There is recognisable in Luke a peculiar partiality, one might say a Pauline enthusiasm, for all sayings of Jesus, which bring out the fact that the gospel of the kingdom is a message of mercy to the poor, the sinful, the moral outcast, the social pariah, the Gentile dog. In his gospel, Christianity appears setting itself free from merely Jewish associations, and becoming human, universal, cosmopolitan. It abounds with passages demonstrating that the mission of Jesus was indeed designed to fulfil the song of the angels who heralded his birth; and to inaugurate a state of things in which God would be glorified throughout the world, and peace established upon the earth among men of goodwill. It is *par excellence* the *evangelic* gospel, while Matthew's is, as already said, the *theocratic*.

These distinctive features of the two gospels come out most clearly perhaps in their respective reports of our Lord's *parabolic* teaching. The difference between Matthew and Luke in this department has been observed and commented on by various writers. Trench, in his well-known work on the Parables of our Lord, remarks: "We may say generally of the parables thus compared, that St. Matthew's are more theocratic, St. Luke's more ethical; St. Matthew's are more parables of judgment, St. Luke's of mercy; those are statelier, these tenderer. St. Matthew's are frequently introduced as containing mysteries of the kingdom of God, language which nowhere occurs in Luke. In St. Matthew God evermore appears as the King, who, sitting on His throne, scattereth away all evil with His eyes, many of them concluding with distinct judgment-acts of a greater or lesser severity. Such judgment-acts are not wanting in the parables of St. Luke, but less frequently occur, while mercy supplies to them their ground tone, as it does to the whole gospel whereunto they belong. They are of the tree which was spared at the gardener's intercession; of the Samaritan who poured oil and wine into the traveller's wounds; of the father who welcomed back his penitent son; nay, even the parable of Dives and Lazarus is a parable of mercy, for it is the declaration of what the issues of *not* showing mercy will be."* But no one has described the peculiar character of Luke's representation of Christ's teaching in general, and of His parabolic teaching in particular, in more eloquent or felicitous language than Renan in his recent work on the Gospels. "There is

* "Notes on the Parables," p. 29, ed. 13th.

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scarcely," he remarks, "an anecdote, a parable, proper to Luke which breathes not the spirit of mercy, and of appeal to the sinful. The only word a little hard which has been preserved as spoken by Jesus becomes with him an apologue full of indulgence and patience. The unfruitful tree must not be cut down too quickly, a good vinedresser opposes the anger of the proprietor, and asks that the soil at the foot of the tree be manured before it be finally condemned. The gospel of Luke is *par excellence* the gospel of pardon, and of pardon obtained by faith. . . . Samaritans, publicans, centurions, frail women, pagans of goodwill, all the objects of Pharisaic contempt, are his clients. His idea is that Christianity has pardons for all the world. The gate is open; conversion is possible for all. Here it is the Samaritan who does the good action, while the priest and the Levite pass by indifferent. There, the publican goes forth from the temple justified by his humility, while the irreproachable but proud Pharisee goes forth unforgiven."*

The difference thus pointed out between the two gospels is well illustrated by two parables, which seem to be the same theme adapted (not by the evangelists, but by our Lord Himself) to different circumstances: those, viz., of the marriage of the king's son, and of the great supper.† In the one it is a *king* who makes a feast, in the other "a certain man." In the former judicial severity is very conspicuous; two manifestations thereof being specified—one towards the despisers of the invitation, against whom a destructive war is waged; the other towards a guest who comes without a wedding garment, and for his offence is bound hand and foot and cast forth into outer darkness; in the latter the judicial element appears under only one manifestation, and in a very mitigated form, the giver of the feast simply resolving that those who had made light of his invitations should not taste of his supper. Once more, in Matthew's parable the grace of the kingdom, while by no means lacking, is not made at all so prominent as in Luke's. The servants are sent out to the highways to invite all and sundry, bad and good, to the marriage. But in Luke's parable they are sent out not once only, but twice; first to the streets and lanes to bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind; and on this being done, and room yet remaining, next to the highways and hedges to compel to come in homeless wanderers, whose backwardness to respond would arise not from any unwillingness to share in the good cheer, but from incredulity as to such as they being really welcome, or as to the invitation addressed to them being seriously meant. To this second order is appended the characteristic reason, "that the house may be *full*," which may be regarded as the key-note of the parable, and the feature of it most congenial to the taste of Luke, the evangelist of the Gentiles. God desires His house to be full, and to be filled with outcasts, since the better sort despise His grace:—such is the thought uppermost in Luke's mind while he relates the parable of the supper.

* *Les Evangiles*, pp. 266-8.

† Matt. xxii. 1; Luke xiv. 16.

It would, however, be a great mistake, let us here say, to suppose that the difference between the two evangelists in these two parables arose from any insensibility on Matthew's part to the gracious side of Christ's teaching. The task he had undertaken imposed on him the necessity of giving prominence to the judicial side. Writing, in the first place, to Hebrews, it was his duty to tell them what Jesus had said concerning the impending fate of the Jewish people if they continued impenitent. In other places he shows clearly his acquaintance and sympathy with the more genial side of the doctrine of the kingdom; as when he records the words spoken by Jesus in defence of His conduct in eating with publicans at His own farewell feast: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." This brief apologetic word contains the essence of what we find taught in detail in Luke's beautiful evangelic parables, such as those of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, and of the Pharisee and the publican.

In one respect Matthew's gospel appears at first view even more evangelic than Luke's. The charge has been brought against the third evangelist of teaching an Ebionitic doctrine concerning the meritoriousness of poverty. The charge is based on such passages as the parable of Dives and Lazarus, which is interpreted as teaching that Dives is punished for being rich, and Lazarus admitted to heaven because he is poor. That Luke should really hold such a view is, inspiration apart, not very likely; for who can imagine a man entering fully into the spirit of the Pauline system of doctrine, as Luke confessedly did, and at the same time making the stupid mistake of attributing merit to mere outward conditions. The two ideas, *salvation by grace* and *salvation by poverty*, can hardly dwell together in the same mind. Nor can we accept, as much more probable, the hypothesis that the juxtaposition of the two ideas in the gospel is due to the evangelist's literary method in compiling his gospel, the method being to combine together in one narrative what he found in his sources, without troubling himself about the consistency of the materials thus brought together. We refuse to believe that the gospel was compiled on any such method; on the contrary, we are persuaded that Luke was guided by an instinctive, if not by a deliberate, reflective, purpose to make all his materials subserve the one great end of setting forth the history of Jesus as a good news of God to all mankind; and we believe that the materials contained in his gospel are capable of serving that end, and are therefore thoroughly harmonious and homogeneous. The poor, like the little child in the discourse on humility, represent an idea—viz., man divested of all that gives him social importance, humanity as it were stripped naked,—and as such, Christ's interest in the poor is simply another indication of the truth that Christianity was destined to be a universal religion, or of the truth that the kingdom of heaven is emphatically a kingdom of grace.

The foregoing are the principal points in which the synoptical gospels differ from each other. We now add a few observations on the character-

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istics of the Gospel of John. In comparison with the fourth gospel, the first three present one and the same story repeated with minor variations. The great outstanding contrast observable in these precious narratives lies between the synoptical gospels, on the one hand, and John's gospel, on the other. The respects in which the latter gospel differs from the foregoing three are numerous, important, and obvious to all readers. For our present purpose the following chiefly demand attention. First of all, the difference in respect of the main scene of our Lord's ministry. In the synoptical gospels the principal sphere of Christ's activity is Galilee, the northern region of Palestine; in John's gospel it is Jerusalem, the narrative being mainly occupied with reports of what occurred in connection with successive visits to the Holy City. This difference in respect to the spheres of labour involves another very marked difference in respect to the character of the ministry carried on in these. The *dicta* and *facta*, especially the former, reported by John, are strikingly diverse from those reported by the synoptical evangelists. The discourses of Jesus recorded by John consist largely of reiterated assertion by the speaker of the Divine dignity of His person and the supreme importance of His mission. The sayings of Jesus reported in the synoptical gospels, on the other hand, are spontaneous and varied utterances of wisdom and love flowing sweetly like a spring from the fountain of grace and truth within. The difference arose naturally out of the diversity of situation. In Galilee Jesus spoke to comparatively receptive hearers, and therefore He spoke as the lowly, loving Son of Man, the Brother and Friend of the poor and the sinful; in Jerusalem He was confronted with proud, contemptuous unbelief, and was constrained to assert His importance as the Son of God, and to express Himself in severe terms in reference to those who despised Him. Only one utterance do we find in the synoptical gospels similar to those with which John's gospel abounds, that, viz., recorded in the eleventh chapter of Matthew: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."* And it is very important to observe that this solitary utterance of the Johannine type is represented as being spoken in circumstances precisely the same as those in which we usually find Jesus placed in John's gospel—viz., in presence of the contemptuous unbelief of "the wise and prudent" ones of Jewish society. The fact suffices to prove that in such circumstances Jesus was wont to speak as John represents Him, and is thus of apologetic value in connection with the question of the authenticity of the fourth gospel. A third difference between the synoptists and John naturally arises out of the one just mentioned—viz., the superiority of the former in respect to *variety*. There is a certain monotony in John's narrative which we do not find in the pages of the synoptical evangelists. The explanation of the fact is simple. In Galilee, in presence of receptive hearers, Jesus

* Matt. xi. 27.

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spoke as His own Spirit moved Him; the well-spring of truth flowed forth freely and copiously without let or hindrance. In Jerusalem He could not speak freely because of unbelief; He could only speak as unbelief constrained, uttering words of self-defence, and of condemnation of His adversaries. The monotony was the fault not of the speaker but of the hearers. Yet one other characteristic of John's gospel remains to be noticed. The discourses recorded in it are not only uniform in character, they are deep, mysterious, awe-inspiring; their interest lies not in the human character of Jesus, which is the great attraction of the synoptical biographies, but in the Divine dignity which the speaker claims for Himself. This characteristic also arises out of the difference in the situation. Just because the words spoken by the Lord at Jerusalem were words of self-defence and self-assertion, they behoved to be at once deep and high, reaching down to the eternal foundations of the world, and up to the highest heavens whence He came.

It remains now in a very few sentences to indicate the conclusions which the foregoing characteristics of the gospels suggest as to their use in the pulpit.

1. In view of the considerable differences between even the synoptical gospels, and the still wider difference between them and the gospel of John, it seems inexpedient to confine oneself to a single gospel, but desirable rather to adopt a method which enables the preacher to avail himself of all the four records in exhibiting to his hearers the work and words and sufferings of the Lord and Saviour.

2. Each gospel might be made subservient to a distinct purpose. If one desired to present a connected view of the conflict of Jesus with the unbelief and darkness of the world, John's gospel would supply the most appropriate text-book. If, on the other hand, the purpose in view were to make a connected study of Christ's miraculous works, Mark's gospel would make it possible to carry on that study with the least amount of interruption. If, again, the aim were to consider the ministry of our Lord in all its completeness as consisting not merely of deeds, but of words and deeds together, then there would be Matthew and Luke to choose from; both of whom give a much fuller view of our Saviour's personal ministry than is given by the second evangelist. And it may be remarked in passing, that it should certainly be every preacher's aim to make his hearers acquainted with both parts of Christ's work.

3. But of Matthew and Luke, which is the better fitted to form the basis of a course of lectures intended to set before the view of a congregation the Man Christ Jesus as He went about on this earth doing good, healing the sick, and speaking words of wisdom and grace to the multitudes that gathered to hear Him? It depends on the method we wish to pursue, and the general impression we wish to leave on our hearers' minds. If we desire to be systematic, then Matthew's gospel is the best for our purpose, for in his gospel Christ's words are gathered together in

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large groups in relation to certain topics. If, on the other hand, we aim at the greatest amount of variety from Sabbath to Sabbath, then Luke's gospel is to be preferred, for it contains a very large number of independent sections, presenting each a suitable theme for discourse, and following each other often in a comparatively unconnected manner. If, again, our desire is to look at Christianity in its relation to the Old Testament and to the theocratic kingdom, Matthew is the appropriate text-book. But if our supreme aim be to show Christ to our hearers as the Desire of all nations, as the Saviour of the world, as the Son of Man come to save the lost, as the embodiment, in all its fulness, of Divine grace and truth, then there is no gospel to be compared to Luke.

4. The characteristics of John's gospel suggest the expediency of its being taken up last by the preacher, as it comes last in the New Testament. Young preachers should begin with the synoptical gospels, and take up John only after they have attained experience and skill in exposition. The simple should come before the more difficult, the varied before the uniform, the human before the Divine. The very depth of John's gospel is apt to attract youthful minds, but the result is likely to be more interesting to the preacher than to the hearer. We have heard of instances of talented young ministers preaching very dreary courses of lectures on John, full of abstruse metaphysics, which their congregations could not follow or appreciate. We have even heard of ministers who attempted the task of expounding this gospel, and broke down in the middle of it. The lesson from this is, begin first with what the fathers called the somatic gospels, and end with the gospel of the Spirit.

A. B. BRUCE.

THE NOVELIST AS A TEACHER.

IT has been long the accepted belief, that the object of the novelist and the use of his book are simply to please. This would have been quite a fair statement of matters a hundred years ago. Then the novel was too often a questionable thing, guarded against by careful parents, and read in secret by the reckless and the young. The world has changed. All read fiction now—parents and children, pastor and people. The great danger now is that of overmuch fiction-reading. One of those silent changes that mark the history of literature in every age and country has altered the novel. In its origin it was the desperate resort of literary hacks and spendthrifts of good education, who had come at last to the husks; and hastily written, it was soon forgotten. To-day the loftiest intellects cultivate this form of writing; the novelist has moved from Grub Street, pushed the British Prime Minister from his seat, and seized the helm of affairs. Edition after edition is pub-

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lished—in paper covers for the million, and with all the circumstance of costly binding and elaborate illustration for the wealthy. Evidently the novelist has something to say that the world is more than willing to hear.

In a recent Review article Mr. Anthony Trollope discourses on novel reading, and gives a running commentary on ingenious English novel-writers, especially Dickens and Thackeray. He presents with much force the teaching power of novels, and asks whether the lessons which they inculcate do not at present go deeper than lessons in other forms. Certainly they do reach a wider circle of scholars, and teach a more popular curriculum than any other means of education,—the newspaper alone excepted. Mr. Trollope looks upon this as rather an incidental and unforeseen outcome, and calls upon us to decide what is to be done in the premises. The question seems to go deeper. From the nature of things, it is the fortune of the novelist, whether consciously or otherwise, to teach. When we know *what* he teaches, we can measure his influence for good or evil; and the answer to the question—*How* is his teaching done? determines his rank in his profession.

Teaching has a double method and a single object. It may be either the giving of information to one who was ignorant, or it may be the placing of something before another, so as to impress it on his mind. The first is teaching through the intellect, the second through the emotions; the object being in either case to produce practical results in the life. That the emotions sway the will, and accomplish their end before slow reason has fairly considered the matter, is human experience. To win the heart means more than to convince the head.

The highest art is to interpret or render the subtle expressions of nature, or the passions of men in sublime action. In its noblest manifestation, it is to gather these materials from many quarters; and, combining both fact and fancy, to produce what shall be natural in the truest sense, and yet beyond nature. The true artist becomes a creator, calls those things that be not as though they were, and so comes very near the Maker in whose image he is made.

Art teaches through the emotions with a range as wide as theirs. It may appeal to the sublime either by sight or sound—as in Church's "Niagara," or Handel's Hallelujah Chorus. The picture may be terrible as Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment," tragic as "Macbeth," or simply beautiful as the "Midsummer Night's Dream." There is no mingling feeling or evanescent emotion to which art may not address itself. There are two things, however, in respect of which it is bound. To *be* art, it must please; and its *grade* is determined, other things being equal, by the *impression* made.

Every great work has lofty thought and intellect, or noble emotion behind it. The picture, statue, drama, or book, makes one better or stronger. One has taken into one's heart some beautiful or noble thing, and aspires to it. If the thing be physically terrible, or dark with crime,

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the man becomes wiser; and no one goes away the worse from its presence. When a work appeals to base passions, or pleases merely by amusing, it falls from the *first* place. Compare a painting of the Loves of the gods with Raphael's Transfiguration. There is the same skill in drawing, colouring, and design, but the thought appealed to condemns the first to a lower place. A Dutch interior will photograph, in colour as well as form, the hay on the mow, the hairs in the horse's mane, or the wooden shoes of a band of rustic revellers—but there is nothing in a stable or the receiving room of an inn to stir emotion. I have always been sceptical about that story of Zeuxis and Parrhasius. Zeuxis, it will be remembered, had executed a fruit-piece so perfectly that the birds came and pecked at it. Exultingly he displayed its perfection, and called upon his rival to draw the curtain and show his picture. But the curtain was the picture; and Zeuxis resigned the palm, saying: "I deceived birds; but you deceived Zeuxis." This was too small work for such men, unless as a mere trial of manual dexterity.

Be the work base or noble, it *teaches* in the measure of its *impression*. If vivid, its lesson of strength and beauty lifts up the man, and makes him better; or its evil weighs him down. Pre-eminently is this true of the powerful novel,—whether good, like Scott's "Ivanhoe" and Miss Muloch's "John Halifax, Gentleman;" or bad, like Fielding's "Tom Jones,"—it appeals alike to intellect and heart; and he is something more or less than man who rises from the perusal just what he was when he sat down. The works of Scott and Dickens have been sold by the million; and an author who cannot boast of his hundred thousand copies or more, is scarcely deemed successful. Such popularity with all classes implies a cause sufficient to overcome the dislike with which the novel was first received by the good. This becomes evident as we trace its history.

The romance of the Middle Ages is the origin of the novel. Born under the skies of Southern France, and full of the wild imagination of the race which gave it its name, the Middle-Ages romance soared beyond the limits of fact, and even probability. Giants and dwarfs, wizards and dragons, were the obstacles which the knight must vanquish to gain the prizes of war or love. Fitted only for a simple, uncritical age, the world outgrew it, and wished for something nearer home.

Daniel Defoe was the inventor of the novel. His first essay in this direction, in the year 1719, will ever hold the place it then took, in English literature. Simple and natural in manners, its hero makes no pretension to superior intelligence. He was but a shrewd, wayward boy, who must needs go to sea. All, therefore, can sympathise with him. His lonely position and shifty expedients, his parrots and goats, and his inimitable man Friday have bewitching interest for young and old. Pure in its influence, with that perfection of art which conceals art, the *first* of novels is also one of the half-dozen best. Defoe had met the desire of the age, and shown the interest of every-day life; and

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hosts of imitators rushed into the new and inviting field. He published several other works more popular in their day than "Robinson Crusoe," but all tainted with the morals of the times. "Roxana," perhaps the ablest, gives the career of a thoroughly depraved woman made to seem successful. In contrast with "Robinson Crusoe" it might be taken as a perfect illustration of a *bad* book. Defoe was writing at the level of his time, and aiming to suit its taste. Unfortunately it was the generation that had grown up under the reign of Charles II. For the same reason the competitors of Defoe followed his example, with the honourable exception of Richardson. Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne stand above the herd in ability, but, with them, wallow in the mire of sensuality. The rest are artificial, stilted, and meretricious, alike in morals and adornment. French taste then ruled Europe. If Defoe made the action of the modern novel that of daily life, Richardson first brought into prominence the inevitable theme of love. He wrote purely—not for fame nor money merely, but to do good, having high principle in his work. Somewhat diffuse for modern taste, and tedious in the elaboration of his plots, Richardson's works have a strange air of reality, and many fine touches of nature and pathos; and he showed men what romance was all around them, if they had but eyes to see. He suddenly became famous, and five editions of his "Pamela"—an unheard of thing then—were sold within a year. The book was attacked, however, for its Puritanism by Fielding, a rollicking, dissipated fellow; and "Pamela" was overwhelmed with ridicule. There was room for it, for the work is undoubtedly marred by a timid sentimentalism, and a preaching tone. Richardson suffered for a time; but he had appealed to the better side of men,—and succeeded in the end. He lived in good circumstances, and died in an honoured old age, while his rivals ran the career of profligates, and had their end.

The realm of fiction gradually grew purer and sweeter. Miss Edgeworth and Miss Austin were the leading novelists in the latter part of the eighteenth century. That told for decency. The great religious movements of the times affected all classes. The writers of fiction were holding up the mirror to a better state of things; and by degrees nastiness became repulsive; for, after all, this is God's world and not the Devil's, and a true picture of vice and its outcome works strongly for its cure.

Scott's wonderful success completed the reaction, and the writers of the filthy school were forgotten. A true, great, and lovable man, he has written few lines he would wish to blot. It was unfortunate that he caricatured the Covenanters; but David Deans is a noble portrait; and generally his works give a juster impression of old Scottish life than the annals of the times. He would ride miles to make his word-pictures on the spot; and they are accurate to the details of the heather and flowers that grow about your feet. Scott looked to nature and studied life, and his works reflect them in all their variety.

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In contrast we place Byron, who can portray only two men—the one defiant, the other despairing; both hard, contemptuous, and sceptical, yet strangely swayed at times by the softer emotions. They were the two sides of his own character.

Shakespeare, Scott, Byron, and the rest, Richardson only excepted, were unconscious, speaking what was in them. That, whether good or bad, depended on their character. Out of the abundance of the heart their pens wrote, doing much to mould the age in which they lived.

Admitting, then, the proposition that the novelist *must* teach, this result should be held for something more than an incidental effect. It should be the purposeful, recognised *end*, in comparison with which all others fall into the second place. The author need not fear lest his work be rendered inartistic by an earnest moral purpose. Horace, who is not over-punctilious in these matters, gives his opinion—

“Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci.”

Success is perfect when profit and pleasure are combined.

Richardson, in the infancy of the novel, writing for a coarse, irreverent age, succeeded grandly with the avowed object of doing good. The average religious novel and Sunday-school book are failures, because untrue to nature. The burden of their lesson is that wrongdoing is unprofitable, and that religion pays in this present world. The boy, however, knows that a lie will often screen faults, and an unfair advantage sometimes helps in winning school honours. Honesty is not always the best policy, when measured by earth and time. If you assert the contrary, and pitch your book on that key, even children find out the error, and disbelieve and reject your teaching, and other things with it of much more consequence. Nor does it always answer to explain the matter with the thought that God does not settle accounts every Saturday night. A certain great author has said, “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

The great masters let us see how vice gnaws and crime punishes, and that the most terrible penalty of sin is to know that you are her thrall, to use, and torture, and destroy. That is the tragedy of Macbeth. He had his every wish, but the throne bought with blood must be cemented by more blood, and sin is punished with more sin. Naturally a man of noble stuff, you cannot but feel that the outward deception that “kept the promise to the ear, but broke it to the hope,” was the least part of his ruin. The best thing for Macbeth was to die; and no tragedy could have been more piteous for him than a victory over Macduff. That is a lesson for all time. Shakespeare teaches a solemn truth, though he avows it not. The religious novel *means* to teach, but is too often only an offence. The causes of success or failure correspond. The one is to follow nature, and the other is to disregard it.

There is yet stronger proof that an earnest moral purpose does not

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interfere with artistic truthfulness, or prevent a success that sends a book down the ages.

The "Pilgrim's Progress," rather a romance than a novel, deals with supernatural imagery and the wildest flights of imagination. The attractive story wins many. Others, who go deeper, note its exquisite character painting; how consistent the portraits are with themselves; ever observing the subtlest distinctions, as between Faithful and Hopeful; and how a few strokes—as in Doré's engravings—make the man stand before you. But, most attractive of all, to those who catch the Dreamer's thought, is the accurate spiritual likeness; and we take the lesson home in a form we neither can nor would forget. No book has ever been so successful, yet none has plainer moral purpose. Bunyan *meant to teach*; and if he had supposed for a moment that the cast of his book would interfere with his object, he would have burnt it as Moses did the golden calf.

The dramatist or novelist has great advantage as a teacher. The average man does not love study, and chafes when regarded as a learner. The drama and novel come as ministers of pleasure, employing the object-lessons so popular with old and young. They dwell on pleasant subjects and have the privilege of stripping off masks and robes, and showing the wires, called motives, whereby they make their characters move. So we smooth down our ruffled pride, and give them an open ear and an unguarded heart.

It is the fashion to declaim against the hollowness of society and the disguises men wear. This is, in the main, very foolish. Masks have a double use—one for concealment, another to present a face different from our own. The first is mostly innocent, the latter base. In the masquerade of life, some one, with pleasant manners and gentle words and deeds, treads life's sad or merry maze. If the outward appearance truly represents the heart, he is not known, for why should the world know what loads he bears, what inward battles he fights, or what infirmities and past crime he bewails? So far we all mask. The other view of the mask implies deception. In either case, the mask becomes second nature; we cannot lay it off; we are unknown even to ourselves, and can understand others only to a certain point. When, therefore, a master of fiction depicts the inner life and motives, and connects these with the outward action, he gives the world something it is pleased to know.

That heart of ours is a strange, fearful, bewildering thing, full of contradictions, glorious and yet grovelling, with the possibilities of an angel or a fiend. Lessons of warning have significance for all; and few are so low that the call "Come up higher" is not a pleasant sound. Every deep human experience speaks something we can understand, and life's lessons are impressed on us as we see the connection of causes and effects.

It is difficult to say whether the slowly-ripened tragedies of common life, winning by the power of sympathy, interest us most, or the intenser passions; as, when safe on shore, we take pleasure in a storm at sea. In

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either case we have the motives, acts, and experience of our fellow-men. Richard III. sleeps the night before Bosworth Field, and the ghosts of his victims pass before him, till the cold sweat starts, and the beholder feels something of his horror. Shakespeare has but shown us the substantial truth of matters; and we learn that conscience holds just such receptions, and that just such guests attend, in many a bad man's heart. At such price few would care to buy a crown and be a king.

Thackeray has the same lesson in daily life. In his *Esmond*, Beatrix is drawn brilliant, attractive, beautiful, and almost good. She wins the homage of men, and is envied by women. She has the love of a noble man, and would love him in return—if she would only give her heart its way. But she has resolved that the world shall be her game, and her attractions are the toils that shall capture it. Self becomes the centre of her own plans, and makes wealth and rank her single aim. Such a creature is as dangerous and as difficult to manage in a novel as in daily life. But the conception is in the hands of a master. No outward trouble comes to her, no disfiguring disease. She only goes down; becomes unfeminine, heartless, and in like degree miserable. The novelist lets us see behind the scenes; shows us the pulleys and the dirt; reveals her motives,—her vile selfishness always deepening, till her pollution of soul comes to the surface, and out of the abundance of the heart the life speaks. That is all. And the result is so loathsome, and her misery so unutterable, that the reader lays down the book and says—"Anything but that." Such sermons get listeners; and they tell, because they are believed.

In the infinite variety of life and human minds and motives, the author has full scope. He can take the framework of history, like Scott, and clothe its dry bones with life. That of any village will have material enough, as MacDonald has shown in his "*Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*." He may, if he will, invent his characters and their surroundings. But having once placed them in life, being where and what they are, he must leave them to do such things, and meet such events as come naturally to men.

A good landscape painting is well balanced and bounded by natural limits; so a novel should be a rounded chapter from life. Daniel Deronda fails miserably in this respect. When the train of events should run smoothly into the depot or station at the journey's end, there is a jar as of carriages off the track, a jolting across the sleepers,—a stop, and we wonder where we are.

Though more easily managed, a happy termination is by no means necessary. Tragedy gains in power as it deepens to the end. We can easily imagine how Shakespeare, had the novel been the demand of his day, would have made Hamlet, Lear, Othello, or Macbeth, quite as effective as they are. The experiment, however, is not likely to be risked. We are not all Shakespeares.

It will be interesting to note the development of these principles in our great writers.

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Dickens' general influence is worthy of all praise. His books run over with sunlight and good-humour. No youth will be the worse for him—nor maiden less modest, but rather kinder, sweeter, and more lenient to the erring. In spite of many unnatural incidents and wooden characters, there is an air of humanity about him that takes you captive. His power to catch nature in her coy moods fills you with delight. The character of Sam Weller is full of sparkles of wit. Nor is Dickens less remarkable in many a deeper picture. No one who has stood in the hush before a battle, with nerves strained and thoughts full of home, will forget how trifles catch the attention, and the mind seeks escape if the body does not. So Fagan in the prisoner's dock, cowering before the gaze of hundreds of vengeful eyes, notices that the arrow-head is gone from the top of one of the railings, and wonders when and how it was lost. Sykes' wandering after the murder is terribly true to nature. None the less evident is the skilful touch when Sykes' dog reads the man, understands his attempt to put it out of the way, and flies; yet cannot forsake him, and is at hand at the last moment, leaping for his dying master's shoulder. He is effective in tragic scenes—witness the death of Quilp; can render quiet sorrow—as when he tells how gentle Paul Dombey drifts out of life; and is exquisitely pathetic in the death of Little Nell.

On the other hand, we find Dickens has a strange lack of fine moral perception. There is not a real character in his books. What is worse, his benevolence is largely a matter of digestion, springs from good-humour, and lays hold only of the outward. His morality fails for the same reason. Suffering is in his opinion the great misfortune; and the virtue that can for any reason inflict pain, he would write down crime. His women have no force; the religious men we are to like are no better; while those drawn in stronger lines are hypocrites. He could not have understood Milton or Luther had he been their cotemporary, and would probably have made of either a Pecksniff. No man has had more influence than Charles Dickens in defining goodness as a misty haze of gush and good-nature; still his faults are rather those of omission, with a balance greatly on the right side.

Some writers, excelling in the management of action and circumstance, give a false tone to their pictures.

Sir Walter Scott would perhaps take the first place among novelists for accuracy in this respect. He has the transparency of Shakespeare, his large-hearted toleration, and lets his characters live after their own choice, and be their natural selves. Everything is indeed Scotch or English, and usually of the mediæval type—true to the place and time he loved to portray; but the light that falls upon the canvas is the pure light of a clear day. In many respects, Hawthorne shows equal power, but his light is false. Brilliant and steady, it reminds you, nevertheless, of the days they must have in some parts of the universe, where astronomers tell us that suns, crimson, green, or blue, flood their circling planets with coloured light. Hawthorne's sun rays out a mystery that colours every-

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thing in a pleasant way. In time, however, the gorgeous tints tire, and we long for a day of nature's simple light. Cooper transgresses in the similarity of his characters. Trappers of the West are not all run in the same mould; but many of his might change name and suits, and sit for each other's photographs, and no one would suspect them.

Enthusiasm superadded to this fidelity to nature gives power. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is Mrs. Stowe's one *great* book, which never will be forgotten, because in it genius was raised to a white heat by intense conviction and earnest purpose. Her feeling became contagious; and a novel was no small element among the causes that upturned slavery and prepared the nation for the great struggle.

This brings us to our conclusion. The old maxim runs—'Si vis me flere, tibi prius dolendum est,'—You must first feel the distress, if you wish me to weep for it. The saying is convertible. If the page trembles and sobs with sorrow, I must weep. Earnestness makes genius sovereign, and moulds men as wax to its purpose. The aim of the novelist, if he would touch the utmost limits of his art, should be to work out and set before us some *lesson* of sweetness, strength, or wisdom, and make it *take hold* upon us by what his characters *do* and *are*.

ALFRED C. ROE.

THE COLONIES AND THEIR CHURCHES.

DESPITE some appearances to the contrary, there are signs that, when the war-clouds are dispersed, and commerce becomes more healthy, the colonial dependencies of Great Britain will command a greater share of attention than hitherto, both from the Government and the people. The Queen's son-in-law governs Canada, and its fiscal regulations excite apprehension in commercial circles. South Africa, even when the present deplorable war comes to a conclusion, will demand the attention of statesmen, and much will have to be done before its resources will be ready for peaceful development. Graham Berry, the elect of the Victorian mob, is knocking at the door of the British Parliament for help to bring the better classes of that unfortunate colony into subjection. The New Zealand emigration office is inundated with applications from would-be emigrants at the rate of a thousand a-day. Our latest colony, the Fijis, with a governor so wise and benevolent as Sir Arthur Gordon and resources so vast, is beginning to affect the markets of the world. Nor will the Australasian colonists rest until England takes under her wing the great continent of New Guinea, though its prospects are at present so unpromising and attempts at discovery have hitherto ended so disastrously. The eventual result of all this must be that public attention will be directed much more than in time past to the embryo states which the Anglo-Saxon race is founding, both in the northern and southern hemispheres.

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Those who are interested in the colonies may well rejoice in this prospect, for it is to the loss of both the mother-country and her dependencies that there should be any lack of interest on either side. The mutual benefits which they may confer on each other are innumerable; and in the fulfilment of her higher mission of spreading civilisation and religion over the globe, Great Britain can have no more useful or effective helpers than her colonial children.

Leaving, however, as foreign to our present purpose, questions of politics and commerce, let us state some reasons why the British Churches should interest themselves in the spread of Christianity in these new lands much more than ordinarily they are disposed to do.

It will be obvious, in the first place, that nothing can be of more importance than that the leaven of the Gospel should pervade these young communities, especially in their early days. Without the salt of Christianity, they will become a mass of festering corruption; real prosperity will be impossible, and instead of exerting a healthful influence, their shadow will fall banefully on all around. Now, every person familiar with colonial life will confess that there are grounds for trembling lest this essential condition of a vigorous and healthy national existence should obtain in a very insufficient degree. That there is much of the preserving salt in the colonies will be gladly confessed; that much of it is in danger of losing its savour is, we fear, equally true. It is the impression of many who are acquainted with colonial cities—we speak especially of the southern hemisphere—not only that true religion is in a terrible minority, but that because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold, and that the Church's true life is being overlaid by abounding worldliness. Nor, speaking humanly, is this to be wondered at. The aim of most colonists is to get rich. It was for this object that they left their native shores. The kingdom of God and His righteousness naturally take a second and inferior place. Then the ties which at home attached them to the Church bind no longer, and many fall a prey to indifference and scepticism. The intense worldliness which reigns affects all, and invades even the Church itself. And thus, with such causes at work, we need not wonder if the future horizon sometimes looms ominously. Happily, there is to set over against all this the influence and example of the living Christianity of the mother-country. It is from this quarter that relief must come. Let the living forces at work here find their way there; let the home Christianity which concerns itself so extensively with heathenism embrace also in its loving regards the colonial Church, and new life will be continually poured into its own bosom, to revive it afresh for the fulfilment of its mission.

There are many ways in which this influence may be exerted. By keeping up, for instance, a close correspondence with colonial Churches, and thereby discovering the necessity for additional labourers, and endeavouring to supply them. For this is, after all, the great want; the harvest is plenteous, while the labourers are few. Moreover, there

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are many places which as yet are unclaimed territories, and are destitute of all ordinances, at least of a Puritan description, that would at once prove profitable and commanding positions, did only some home Church undertake the responsibility of making them missionary stations. The peculiarity of the colonist and the resident abroad is that he takes it for granted that some Church should bring ordinances to his door. He is ready to take advantage of them when he gets them, but he falls into the supposition that it is the part of others to bring them near. Mr. Anthony Trollope remarked this peculiarity in his Australasian wanderings. A minister, known for his zeal in church extension, was once invited by a solitary individual to visit the great pastoral region in which he lived for the purpose of establishing a church. The very presence of a minister, it was urged, would be beneficial. When the clergyman answered this call, he found that though there was an utter absence of all appearance of religion, every person he met promised to welcome and to support any worthy labourer. Apparently it had never occurred to them to move in the direction of supplying their wants, but when aid was brought to their doors, they were prepared cheerfully to undertake all responsibility. This is typical of the colonies, and proves how easy and inexpensive the work of church extension is. But, above all, let the colonial Churches, and those scattered abroad, feel that they are affectionately remembered in the prayers and the sympathies of the Churches at home. Nothing will more sustain the often fainting spirit of the Christian worker than this, or animate him for his laborious task. It is comparatively easy for the true pastor at home to be cheerful and diligent in his work, surrounded as he is by an atmosphere of Christian encouragement; it is far different to be alone and friendless, surrounded by men who care only for their own things, and not for the things of Jesus Christ. We plead, therefore, for a deeper and more intelligent interest in colonial Christianity; we plead for the prayers and sympathies of the Churches in behalf of their distant brethren; all this will mightily contribute to strengthen the struggling Christianity of these new regions, and to diffuse that leaven which will contribute to their true prosperity more than anything else which could be given them.

Again, there is a close connection between colonial and foreign missions. This will be evident if it is remembered that not so very long ago the missions in all the South Sea Islands were sustained by the Churches of Great Britain and America. Now, however, the headquarters of these missions are transferred to Australia and New Zealand. This is their natural centre; and as the churches there thrive and grow, they will relieve the home Churches altogether of the care and support of the missionary work of the South Pacific. There are, alas! islands which rise in gorgeous beauty from these placid waters as yet unblest by the presence of the messengers of the cross, but the day is rapidly drawing near when the native-born of Australia and New Zealand will go up to possess them in the name of Christ. Again, there is now scarcely a corner

of Australia or New Zealand where you will not come in contact with the almost ubiquitous Chinaman. Sheep-station and gold-field, even the large town and its suburb, are seats of their industry; and so good must be their report of the land, that their countrymen are still hastening in increasing numbers to these shores. Nor do they come as the ordinary immigrant to make for themselves a permanent home; but only to realise a modest fortune, and then return to their own kindred. Now, it cannot but be that they will learn much during their stay among Anglo-Saxon Christians. They are naturally keen and observant. The Chinaman often says, "Me no savey," when he knows pretty well the meaning of what is said to him and what passes before him, though he may find it convenient to seem ignorant. Many of them possess in their own language portions of Scripture, which they diligently read. They have opportunities of contrasting their own heathen ways with those prompted by Christian beneficence; as when, for instance, an accident happens, and their superstitious fears will cause them to leave their unfortunate countryman to his fate; while at this juncture, to their astonishment, their European neighbours play the part of the good Samaritan. In addition to this teaching by example, the churches are increasingly taking advantage of their opportunity, and employing agents to bring them to the knowledge of the truth. Thus in the providence of God will the colonies largely contribute to the evangelisation of the great empire of China itself.

Then again, as we consult the map of the world, we perceive that God is surrounding the world with a belt of the Anglo-Saxon race as if for the speedier disappearance of its darkness. America and Australasia stretch their hands over the heathenism which lies between them. The Sandwich Islands, once the terror of the mariner, are now a Christian state. The Fijis are not only a British colony, but their dark-skinned inhabitants embrace English religion in its most pronounced forms. The South Sea Islands, as we have already mentioned, are now nearly all in the hands of missionaries who look to the colonial Churches for their support. Already New Guinea, on the further side of Australia, is the scene of missionary labour as it will soon be a sphere for Australian enterprise. And as these new communities grow, and the Churches in them prosper, the radius of their Christian influence will extend and widen, and more intimately meet and join with the older missions of the British Churches. Thus it becomes evident that by fostering colonial Christianity we contribute in a degree which cannot be calculated to the extinction of heathenism on the face of the earth.

Again, how strange it is that the weary workers in our home-mission fields seldom turn their eyes to the colonies for help. A large measure of success indeed attends their labours. Yet the progress made is only as a drop from the bucket to the whole mass. Other forces besides are working which soon fill up any gaps in the ranks of the outcast which

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home-mission labour may have made. The work is carried on under unfavourable circumstances—want, overcrowding, the commingling of the evil with the good, all tend to roll back the stone which the home workers are endeavouring to push up the hill. Now the colonies are hungering for that very bone and sinew, that wasted intellect which is here so plentiful that our resources are taxed to the utmost to sustain them in the feeblest life. And let but the rescued waifs of humanity be transported to these new lands, they would require assistance no more. The fresh air and abundant food soon work a wonderful change. Formerly it was difficult to persuade them to enter a church, the church was only a place for respectable people; but now they feel that they belong to that very class, and they act accordingly. All over the colonies you will meet with individuals occupying respectable positions in society and in the Church who, in their early days, belonged to the class for whose elevation home missions are instituted. And there is room for such to any extent. Not for generations to come will the colonies complain of a superabundance of labour. Most lawfully, then, might the home mission have its emigration department; and at a very small expenditure,—for some Colonial Governments grant free and assisted passages,—might crown their successes by starting their subjects afresh in a new country where the degrading influences of poverty and want need not be known. We can here only suggest; but the perplexed philanthropist may rest assured that here he may find a solution of many of the sad problems which stare him in the face.

But perhaps we have said enough to prove that it is the duty and interest of British Christianity to extend a helping hand to the colonial Churches. They do not ask, let it be remembered, to be treated as objects of charity. They are able and willing to bear their own burdens. But they will be grateful for labourers, for sympathy, and encouragement. And in no field will the good seed of the Word yield a more abundant return.

A. F. DOUGLAS.

CHURCH ACTION IN REGARD TO TEMPERANCE.

WE now continue the notes on temperance, as it is dealt with by the Churches, our papers being furnished, as before, by prominent friends of the cause in their respective communions.

IV.—PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

We thankfully recognise two general grounds of encouragement in this work. First, the undoubted spread of interest in the cause of temperance, and the deepened sense of responsibility felt by Christian men. The magnitude of the evil is appalling, and unhappily the strength of the defences of the vested interests against which we have to contest every inch of our advance in reform, has been greatly, if gradually, increased by successive Acts of the Legislature. The sum spent on intoxicating drinks in the United Kingdom in 1876 was

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£147,000,000. In the commercial depression of 1877 it showed a decrease of about £5,000,000. But again the brewing trade is boasting that while other trades have been depressed, it is on the increase. And the darkest feature of all is the steady growth of drunkenness among women—the mothers of the rising generation. The report on this subject laid before the Synod of 1878 thus sums up the evils arising from immoderate drinking:—"If it be true that in England 60,000 persons die from the effects of excessive drinking during every year; if it be true that—as represented by judges and magistrates—75 per cent. of the crime of the country is due, directly or indirectly, to strong drink; if it be true that—as brought out by a return recently issued by the House of Commons—the number of arrests for drunkenness in England for the last twenty-five years has been steadily and rapidly on the increase, the number in 1851 having been 70,097, whilst in 1876 it had mounted up to 104,174; if it be true that the undue use of intoxicating drinks is constantly ruining for time and eternity tens of thousands of families throughout the land: if all this be true—and your committee believe it is—they do submit that no effort which the Synod can legitimately and wisely put forth should be neglected, in order that this terrible evil may be arrested." With the prevalence of such views the subject of temperance is no longer reckoned wearisome or unsuitable in our church courts, but is treated with increasing vigour and earnestness.

The second ground for congratulation is found in the circumstance, that, by general consent, the temperance reform is moving upon broader lines than formerly. The necessity is recognised of uniting all good men in the death-grapple with drunkenness, the great enemy of our physical, moral, and spiritual well being. Abstainers and non-abstainers are banding themselves together in the common enterprise.

It must, however, be admitted, that in our church capacity we have not done much. Our Synod has in the main confined itself to appointing special sermons to be preached on intemperance, and to petitioning Parliament on such subjects as the Sunday Closing of Public-houses. Hitherto the cause of temperance has been a branch of the Home Mission Committee's work. The Synod of 1878 was overtured to form a separate committee to take charge of the subject. The decision of this question was postponed for a year. The advocates of a separate committee urged that more careful and minute attention would thus be secured for the work. The opponents argued that the movement was likely to be safer and broader in the hands of a general committee such as the Home Mission, than in the hands of men selected because of their known enthusiasm in the cause. The recent Synod, however, unanimously agreed to the appointment of a temperance committee, with the Rev. James Towers, of Birkenhead, as convener.

Much may be done, and is being done, by ministers and members of this Church, along with good men of other communions, in their private capacity. Magistrates have been successfully urged to put a restraint upon the increase of licences. In some instances the appointment of special police inspectors of public-houses has been secured, and has been followed by most marked and salutary effects; and other reforms, in the administration of the existing Acts, are being pressed by resolute men.

It may be mentioned that an esteemed member of our Church, Mr. Alexander Balfour, who has done yeoman's service in this cause in many ways, has, after careful personal inquiry in Sweden, published an admirable pamphlet on the Gothenburg system, which has not been without its effect in producing that change of public opinion on this question, which has recently culminated in the recommendation of the Lords' Committee on Intemperance in reference to the modified plan proposed by Mr. Chamberlain, of Birmingham. The same gentleman has quite lately printed, but not published, a very valuable pamphlet, in which he throws strong light on a topic which had not previously attracted much attention—viz., the high alcoholic strength of the beer that is used in many public-houses. This has escaped legislative notice, so that a given amount of spirits in

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beer is much more lightly taxed than the same amount in whisky. The consequence is that the goal of intoxication can be reached by the degraded at a lower price through beer than through whisky. It will surprise many to learn, on the authority of the Liverpool public analyst, that each imperial pint of a certain public-house "strong ale" submitted to him, "contains the equivalent of about one and a-half glass of strong brandy, or nearly two glasses of the ordinary whisky which is sold over the bar of a public-house." This points to an important factor in the prevailing intemperance of England, and demands attention both on moral and fiscal grounds, in the next Licensing Bill which shall be brought in.

Our Church gives forth no uncertain sound on the question of Sunday closing. That is probably the next great point that will be won. On this subject we are at present misrepresented by our representatives. The Legislature seems unable to realise the ripeness of public opinion in reference to it. What on this question says Liverpool, which, according to the Report of the Lords' Committee, is the most drunken town in England? A house-to-house canvass of the 68,879 rate-payers of Liverpool was made in 1875. The result was that 44,061 voted for entire Sunday closing and 8542 against it. I am in a position to vouch for the genuineness of the canvass. Now, if this is the opinion of Liverpool, the opinion of other towns and places in England will certainly be found in general, and in point of fact has been found, to be not less advanced. And yet our representatives are afraid to touch the question, on the plea that legislation must not move faster than public opinion. We object to the 8500 giving law to the 44,000. We maintain that the country is far in advance of the Legislature on this question. Drunkards themselves often tell us that they would be thankful to be delivered from the inducements to Sunday drinking. What we need is not so much to educate as to express public opinion. The Church of Christ has this matter in its own hands. If it resolves to give adequate expression to its convictions and its demands, no Legislature can persist in refusal. The Church of England, which long lagged behind the rest of the community, is now awake, and is taking its place in the van of this movement—a circumstance full of promise.

On another important point, not alone our Church, but the Church of Christ in the land, seems to have reached substantial agreement. They appear nearly ready to unite upon the principle of Sir Wilfrid Lawson's recent Resolution, which in effect would give to the people, in some convenient form, the control of the liquor traffic.

One more favourable feature we must mention—the rapid and successful extension in many places of the British Workman Public-house movement. In Liverpool we have thirty-six of these "cocoa rooms." They are a great commercial success, which will secure their permanence; and they are an untold moral benefit, which makes them worthy of permanence.

R. H. LUNDIE.

V.—ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

In the Established Church of Scotland there are two distinct organisations for the promotion of temperance working for the one end — *i.e.*, the General Assembly's Committee on Intemperance, and "The Church of Scotland Temperance Association." The Assembly's Committee is composed of ministers and laymen, appointed by the supreme court of the Church to watch over the interests of temperance; and while it aims at enlisting all the office-bearers of the Church in the temperance movement, it encourages the practice of total abstinence by every means consistent with its responsibility to the Assembly. The following deliverance of the General Assembly of 1879 defines the standpoint of the Church as represented by this Committee:—

"The General Assembly approve of the report, reappoint the Committee, with power to add to their number, and instruct them to watch over the interests of temperance in the Church.

"The General Assembly instruct the Committee to aid parish ministers in the pro-

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motion of parochial temperance organisations ; to put themselves in communication with the theological professors, with the view of bringing the interests of temperance before the divinity students of the Church ; to promote a scheme which may assist parish ministers to impress the minds of the young with the evils of intemperance ; and to collect and report such information as may be useful to the Church in her efforts to suppress the vice of drunkenness.

"The General Assembly enjoin ministers, on Sunday, the 21st day of December next, to make the observance of temperance the subject of their sermons, and to offer special prayer to Almighty God in view of the great evils of intemperance."

The report which called forth the above deliverance contained a reference to the action of the inferior courts of the Church, and we may here quote the reference as an illustration of "characteristic resolutions" :—

"Your Committee learn with satisfaction that the inferior courts of the Church are beginning to take an earnest interest in this matter. Your Committee would specially refer to the action of the Synod of Aberdeen. They have received a copy of an excellent report, which was read before the Synod in April last by the Rev. Robert Milne, minister of Towie, Convener of the Synod's Committee on Intemperance. The Synod's Committee issued queries to all the Presbyteries within the bounds, to which much useful information and many practical suggestions were returned. From the materials thus furnished a report was drawn up and laid before the Synod. The following are the practical suggestions of which the Synod approved :—

"*a.* That ministers and other office-bearers be recommended to discourage, so far as their example and direct influence goes, all such social drinking customs as they find to lead directly or indirectly to intemperance, and to give whatever encouragement they can to the use of unintoxicating beverages where drink is required.

"*b.* That they give every encouragement to the establishment of temperance public-houses and temperance tents in markets, as also to public halls where rational and elevating enjoyments can be obtained without the temptation of intoxicating drinks, and that they solicit the aid of proprietors and other influential persons for this purpose.

"*c.* That they use every effort to put down unnecessary and ill-conducted drinking establishments, and for this purpose endeavour to obtain the co-operation of the proprietors on whose lands they are situated, and others interested in the diminution of intemperance ; that they do all in their power to create a healthy public opinion on the subject.

"*d.* That ministers be recommended to bring the evils of intemperance under the attention of the young, and to take opportunities of referring from the pulpit to the heinousness of this sin in the sight of God, and to the need of the exercise of that self-denial which is the duty of all the professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and that it might be expedient for this Very Reverend Court to appoint some Sabbath in the year on which special reference should be made from the pulpits to this national vice."

The Assembly's Committee have not been forward with legislative proposals beyond seeking to influence Parliament in favour of such measures as the *Habitual Drunkards' Bill* and *Sir Robert Anstruther's Bill*, and seeking to strengthen the hands of magistrates in reducing the number of public-houses, and in enforcing the existing laws. The Church is specially anxious to develop the powers of truth and practical organisation which are within the Church herself, and to encourage all her ministers to take those steps most calculated to promote temperance in view of the special circumstances of their respective parishes. The conclusion of the Committee's Report may be quoted as indicating the views of the Assembly in regard to total abstinence :—

"Your Committee desire to express their thankfulness that so many ministers are alive to the evils of intemperance, and are promoting, in a spirit of earnestness and prayer, the spiritual interests of the Church by personal self-denial and by reaching out a helping hand to the weak and the tempted. In a large organisation like the Church of Scotland there is room for difference of opinion and policy in regard to total abstinence. Your Committee feel assured that the General Assembly will respect the convictions and the conduct of those who, from a sense of personal risk, or from a desire to increase, by every lawful means, their spiritual influence over others, entirely abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors. Such men, whose conduct in this direction is imbued with the spirit of Christ, cannot fail to be a strength to the Church. Your Committee feel assured that the Assembly will encourage, by its approval, such men, and desire to see their number

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increased. On the other hand, your Committee would urge on the abstainers of the Church the duty and expediency of respecting the convictions of those who cannot see their way to personal abstinence, but who are nevertheless anxious to see the reproach of drunkenness removed from the Church and the country, and who are willing to work for this great end in united and friendly effort. Your Committee desire to see every minister of the Church taking up this question with enlightened zeal, impressed with the fact that, while the best instrumentality for promoting temperance is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the influence of healthy self-denying temperance reacts on the progress of the kingdom of God as an aid to the Gospel, which is a gospel of self-denial and purity."

"The Church of Scotland Temperance Association" was instituted rather more than three years ago, and though it is not connected officially with the General Assembly, the Moderator of the Assembly is generally its president, and the ex-moderators and the leaders of the Church, both ministers and elders, are vice-presidents; and the General Assembly of 1876 referred to it in the following terms of approval:—"The General Assembly express satisfaction at the formation of the Association called 'The Church of Scotland Temperance Association,' and hereby recommend it to the favourable consideration of ministers and members of the Church." The basis of the Association is much the same as that of the Church of England Temperance Society, which has taken such a prominent place among temperance organisations, its aim being to combine in temperance action both abstainers and non-abstainers. The following extracts from "The Constitution and Rules" of the Association indicate its position both in regard to the Church and the temperance movement:—

"The objects aimed at by the Association shall be—

"(a.) To direct attention to the intemperance which everywhere prevails, and to impress upon the members of the Church the responsibility which rests upon them to use every legitimate means for its suppression.

"(b.) To educate public opinion, so that drunkenness shall be considered a disgrace and a sin, and that those guilty of it shall be made to feel that they are under the ban of society.

"(c.) To unite, for mutual aid and encouragement, all who may be making, or are willing to make, efforts for the suppression of drunkenness; and to provide for total abstainers and non-abstainers working in harmony, each class in its own way, for the promotion of the common object.

"(d.) To reclaim those who have fallen into intemperate habits, and to strengthen them to resist temptation.

"(e.) To remove temptations to drunkenness, and especially to advocate a reduction in the number and the better regulation of public-houses.

"(f.) To co-operate with other Churches in efforts for the suppression of drunkenness.

"The Association, in order to carry out the objects aimed at in the preceding rule, shall—

"(a.) Arrange lectures, sermons, public meetings, &c.

"(b.) Watch over any measures that may be introduced into Parliament bearing on the intemperance of the country, and take what steps may be expedient in regard to them.

"(c.) Endeavour to impress upon the magistrates the necessity for reducing the number of public-houses, as opportunity occurs, and for very strictly administering the law for the prevention of drunkenness.

"(d.) Advocate counter attractions to the ordinary public-house, such as improved dwellings, recreation grounds, public-houses without drink, &c.

"(e.) And, generally, endeavour by all legitimate means to promote habits of sobriety.

"The Association shall consist of two sections—(1.) A General Section, including those who, without being personal abstainers, agree to exert their influence to suppress intemperance; and (2.) A Total Abstinence Section, including those who consider that total abstinence is 'good for the present necessity,' and who have taken a pledge or signed a declaration of personal abstinence. The members of each section shall endeavour to act towards the members of the other section on the principles laid down in Rom. xiv. 3, 5—'Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth.' 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.'

"The Association shall endeavour to secure the formation of a Temperance Society in every parish, such parochial societies to be constituted on general or total abstinence principles, or on both, as may be deemed best fitted to meet the requirements of the

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parish. No parochial society to be recognised by the Central Association if the kirk-session refuse to sanction it."

At present we have not the means of an accurate statistical estimate of the position of temperance in the Church in the number of abstaining ministers, parochial societies, coffee-houses, public-houses without drink, &c. The Assembly's Committee propose to collect this information during the current year. But it is felt on all hands that while we have a share of the apathy that exists all over the country in this important question, there is a hopeful awakening throughout the Church of practical interest in the suppression of the vice of drunkenness.

GEORGE WILSON.

VI.—FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

For a few years after her separation from the State in 1843, the Free Church of Scotland took action in the cause of temperance through her Committee on the State of Religion in the Country. In the Assembly of 1846, a number of overtures from presbyteries regarding intemperance were considered, and a report by the above-named committee was approved, which commended total abstinence as "one of the legitimate remedies for the evils of intemperance." Ministers were also enjoined by this Assembly to preach on the subject of intemperance on the first Sabbath of December. In 1847, in connection with fresh overtures from presbyteries, a separate Committee on Temperance was appointed—Dr. D. Macfarlan, convener; Principal Cunningham, Dr. Moody Stuart, Dr. Tweedie, Professor MacLagan, and other well-known names being in the list of members. In 1853, in an enlarged committee, under the convenerhip of Dr. (then Mr.) Wilson, of Dundee, vigorous action was taken in support of the Forbes Mackenzie Act for Sabbath closing, for the separation of grocers' and spirit licences, and for counteracting or diminishing the evils of the existing public-house system. It is recorded in the minutes that "Principal Cunningham and Mr. J. C. Brown spoke in favour of the practice of abstinence;" and the following resolution was agreed to:—"That the practice of abstinence be recognised by the committee as one of the legitimate remedies for the evils of intemperance, it having been sanctioned by the Assembly of 1846, and commended in last year's report; without, however, in the slightest degree binding the members of the committee personally." The Assembly of 1854 approved of a report by their Temperance Committee, in which they "suggest the formation of temperance societies" on Christian principles.

In the May number of this journal, Dr. Reid says: "The Established Church has taken the lead in recommending the formation of parish temperance societies." So far as my information goes, I am disposed to doubt the historical accuracy of the statement. According to our Report of 1854, "at least sixty of the returns (from ministers and kirk-sessions) recommended this plan as a valuable agency in connection with the preaching of the Gospel; and it is an instrumentality which has been largely blessed. . . . It is not desired that this principle should be either enforced or enjoined on any, but simply that the reproach which has hitherto rested upon it may be rolled away, and that it may rank among the legitimate but subordinate agencies of Christian missions."

In 1856 Professor James Miller, the able occupant of the Chair of Surgery in the University of Edinburgh, became convener of the Assembly's Committee on Temperance. Under his eloquent and energetic advocacy in the Assembly, through the press, and on public platforms, the cause of temperance reform made marked progress in the Church and country. The committee renewed their recommendation (in reports unanimously approved by the Assembly, 1857-59) of "Temperance Societies, when founded on gospel truth, and conducted with prudence and sobriety." They "pressed" upon the Assembly "the importance of every one making conscience-work of this question, whether or not, under many circumstances, it may not be expedient for the practical Christian to abstain altogether from the ordinary use of intoxicants; neither practising nor promul-

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gating abstinence as a virtue in itself, but giving to it a prominent and a practical place as one of the legitimate but subordinate agencies in Christian missions." The influence of the Church was also brought to bear in various ways, year after year, against the drinking usages of the country, and the evils of the licensing system, and in favour of better houses for the working classes, more opportunities for rational and healthful recreation, the establishment of temperance refreshment and reading rooms, &c.

After the death of Professor Miller in 1864, the attention of the committee was for some years chiefly given to supporting wholesome measures of a legislative kind bearing on temperance. A growing feeling in the Church in favour of some more distinct utterance by the Assembly itself on the question of abstinence led to one or two debates and divisions in the House on this point. In 1876, the Temperance Committee was enlarged, and a declaration made by two successive Assemblies, "recognising abstinence, on the ground of Christian expediency, as a lawful and honourable course for the friends of temperance, especially as regards the personal protection of many who are exposed to special danger, and the influence which it exerts in opposition to the drinking usages of the country." This was cordially accepted as the ground for a good working understanding between the abstaining and non-abstaining members of the Temperance Committee, the latter section being represented by the convener, and the former by the secretary; and the work of the committee has for the last three years been carried on in great harmony and with very hopeful results. The committee have put themselves into communication with every Presbytery of the Church through a corresponding member, generally the convener of the Presbyterian Temperance Committee, and have been greatly encouraged by many evidences of the growing and practical interest taken in this great cause by the subordinate courts throughout the whole country. One of their circulars to Sessions and Presbyteries may be given in illustration of the mode in which they seek to advance the cause by availing themselves of the organisation of the Presbyterian Church. The circular was sent, through the kindness of the convener, William Kidston, Esq. of Ferniegar, to every minister in the Church:—

"The Committee on Temperance would respectfully remind your Kirk-Session and Presbytery of the Deliverance of last General Assembly on this subject, especially of the following clauses:—

"The Assembly renew their injunction to all the Ministers of the Church, in addition to appropriate references in their ordinary ministrations, to preach a sermon on Temperance on the third Sabbath of December, or on either of the two following Sabbaths, and instruct Presbyteries to see that this injunction is attended to, and to report to the Committee. . . . They also again *strongly recommend* all Presbyteries, who have not yet done so, to appoint Temperance Committees. The Assembly renew their *exhortation to Ministers and Sessions* to see that, so far as in them lies, the young of the Congregation are trained up in habits of Temperance by means of Bands of Hope, or otherwise; and the Assembly also *recommend all Kirk-Sessions to consider the propriety of forming Congregational Temperance Associations* upon a well-considered basis, and under the superintendence of Minister and Office-bearers."

"In connection with the above Deliverance:

"1. The Committee would suggest as a suitable basis for such Temperance Associations, the Assembly's declaration (1877-8), 'recognising Abstinence, on the ground of Christian expediency, as a lawful and honourable course for the friends of Temperance, especially as regards the personal protection of many who are exposed to special danger, and the influence which it exerts in opposition to the drinking usages of the country.'

"This declaration, along with a simple promise of personal abstinence, has been already adopted as the basis of a number of Congregational Temperance Societies. The basis of the 'Church of England Temperance Society' (comprising a 'Non-abstaining' as well as an 'Abstaining' section), and that of the Irish Assembly's Temperance Association, will be found in the Blue Book, 1877, Temperance Report, page 5f; Blue Book, 1878, Temperance Report, page 2.

"2. Several members of the Committee have expressed their willingness to visit Congregations, where this is wished, to aid in forming Temperance Associations or Bands of Hope.

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"3. The Committee would suggest Temperance Tents at Hiring Fairs, Temperance Refreshment Stalls at Railway Stations, &c. See Report, 1878, page 5f.

"4. The Committee would be greatly obliged by information as to any British Workman's Public-houses, and as to the use of Temperance facts and lessons under school-boards within the bounds of your Presbytery.

"5. They would also ask name of Convener of your Temperance Committee, if not already given, or any change made.

"EDINBURGH, July 10, 1878."

A large number of Congregational Temperance Societies for young and old—almost all of them on the basis of total abstinence—have been formed, in addition to those already existing in the Church, in accordance with the recent and repeated recommendations of the General Assembly.

Deputations in name of the committee have addressed the students in the different theological colleges of the Church on the question of temperance. The committee regard it as a most hopeful sign for the rising ministry that so many of the students are members of the College Temperance Societies, and are taking a keen and intelligent interest in the various aspects of the greatest social problem of our country and time. The New College Society (Edinburgh), of which Principal Rainy is Honorary President, has an abstaining and a non-abstaining section, and numbers about eighty members. At Glasgow, Professor A. B. Bruce, D.D., is Honorary President. Both there and at Aberdeen the basis is total abstinence, and the Societies include in each case more than half the students attending the Hall. (See College Calendar of Free Church for 1879-80, pp. 43, 67, 82.) I may add a sentence from a letter by the late Principal Cunningham to Professor Miller (quoted by the latter in the Assembly of 1857), which shows that it is no new thing for the foremost of our theologians to take a warm practical interest in the temperance movement: "I do not hesitate to state to our students my conviction that if they were just *de facto* to abandon henceforth the use of all intoxicating liquors, the aggregate result would be a prodigious benefit to them, to the community, and to the Church of Christ."

As the latest utterance of the Free Church of Scotland upon temperance, the Assembly of 1879 unanimously adopted the following deliverance:—

"The Assembly renew their injunction to all the Ministers of the Church, in addition to appropriate references in their ordinary ministrations, to preach a sermon on Temperance on the *third* Sabbath of December, or on either of the two following Sabbaths, and instruct Presbyteries to see that this injunction is attended to, and to report to the Committee.

"They again strongly recommend all Presbyteries, who have not yet done so, to appoint Temperance Committees. The Assembly renew their exhortation to Ministers and Sessions to see that, so far as in them lies, the young of the congregations are trained up in habits of temperance by means of Bands of Hope or otherwise; and the Assembly again recommend all Kirk-sessions to consider the propriety of forming Congregational Temperance Associations upon a well-considered basis, and under the superintendence of Minister and Office-bearers.

"The Assembly resolve to petition Parliament in support of the 'Licensing Acts Amendment Bill,' and empower the Committee to petition in their name in support of Sir W. Lawson's Resolution, if again brought forward, or of any similar proposal in the direction of 'local option.'

"The Assembly press anew the whole subject of prevailing intemperance, and the imperative duty of using all lawful and expedient means for its removal, upon the attention of all office-bearers and members of the Church; and in particular, the Assembly enforce the duty of discouraging in every way, both by influence and example, the drinking usages of the country."

D. D. BANNERMAN,

Secretary of Assembly's Committee on Temperance.

NOTES OF THE DAY.

"THE CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN."—In commencing a new half-yearly volume, we may be allowed to express our gratification at the kindly reception which has been given to our work. The difficulties connected with so novel an undertaking were great in themselves, but just as we were preparing to begin, Scotland was visited by a commercial cyclone that seemed to make any new undertaking hopeless. That we should have achieved a measure of success in these circumstances was extremely encouraging. That the interest in our undertaking should have extended, more or less, to all the Churches and countries where Presbyterian principles are maintained was a still greater encouragement. It is pleasant, too, to think of the measure of interest which our journal has excited outside the Presbyterian lines. We have had communications from clergymen and laymen of the Church of England, from Mr. Spurgeon, and other English Nonconformists, from members of the Lutheran Church on the Continent, and from others, expressing cordial approval of the spirit and the aims of this journal. All this is encouraging, but we wish to say, at the same time, that we are yet far from our ideal. From the first it seemed to us that such a journal could prove a permanent success only if leading men in the various Presbyterian Churches should take it up with a considerable measure of earnestness, and use it for uttering some of their most earnest thoughts on topics on which the Churches are craving guidance or requiring stimulus. We have always had some doubt whether this would be attained at first, because the greatest men in our Churches—the men whose voices can reach far and near—have often been slow to use the press for influencing their fellows. We have had kind words from all of them, and noble aid from some; but from the majority, a flood of excuses. We do hope that ere this volume is completed—ere the first year of our journal is ended—it will be found to number among its contributors many more of those whose names are household words, though we know that they are about the busiest men of their day. We hope, too, that a little more spontaneity will be shown by many more who could aid us nobly in the departments of "Open Council" and "Notes and Queries," and that we shall not have to close these departments, through sheer want of support. With God's blessing, and more exertion on the part of our friends, this journal may become a powerful means for gathering, preserving, and applying all that is best in the experience of the past, and sending the pure water of life, with fresh current and enlarged volume, to the ends of the earth.

THE ZULU WAR.—There has been a very general tendency to reprobate the Zulu war. On the other hand, many have felt that such a man as Sir Bartle Frere was not likely to enter on so terrible a business without strong reason. It seems to us that a glance at the map of South Africa must show every one that the very existence of a great standing army in Zululand was a threat to the British colonies of the most serious import. Zululand is surrounded by Natal and the Transvaal, and the King could have had no dream of invasion from either of these. For what purpose, then, keep up a standing army? His neighbours had good cause to ask the question, and to require him, firmly but patiently, to disband the army, which could only be used for attacking them.

But here comes another question. Has the treatment of the native races of

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South Africa generally been conciliatory and fair? Above all, has it been animated by a Christian spirit? It must be confessed that colonists are often grossly unjust to native races. In the Cape of Good Hope, they were so flagrantly. At one time the Boers behaved most unrighteously to the natives. It was for befriending the native races that Dr. Livingstone incurred the wrath of the colonists, and at last got his house at Kolobeng burned, and lost three hundred pounds worth of property. In his South African Journal, Mr. Froude says that he sailed to Africa in the same steamer with a Natal judge, who told him that he had once tried a white man, caught redhanded, for the murder of a native. Though the case was as clear as day, the jury found the man "not guilty," and the audience applauded. It is to this rough treatment of natives that many of these wars are ultimately due. If their rights were carefully respected, if a Christian spirit were shown towards them, if regard were had to their condition as savages, and some interest were taken in their welfare, better things would come. Not at first in every case, but patience would at last have its reward. Strong Christian races, planted among savages, might show their strength by other means than blood and iron.

THE NEW TREATY WITH PORTUGAL.—Like cold water to a thirsty soul came, a few days ago, the news of a treaty of commerce between Britain and Portugal, intimating that Portugal has consented to open up the Zambesi to trade, and grant other rights which will bear most vitally on the civilisation and, we believe, ultimate Christianisation of Africa. This step, in conjunction with the obligations under which the rulers of Egypt and Zanzibar lie for the suppression of the slave-trade, will have most important results. The introduction of legitimate traffic was what the late Dr. Livingstone ever looked to as the surest antidote to the slave-trade, inasmuch as such trade, duly secured, would be far more profitable than the other, and would remove the temptation which self-interest creates to prosecute it. Legitimate commerce, too, will admit of the more free and full operations of Christian missions, and thus open a new era for Africa. We are not disposed to be over-confident, because on former occasions Portugal has grievously disappointed the hopes of those who trusted her; but never before was the prospect so bright. The toils and sacrifices of Livingstone, and like-minded men, seem on the eve of being crowned with success.

Africa, as we have said before, will be one of the great fields of the missionary effort of the future. We may take this opportunity of supplying an omission in our April number, when referring to the article on Missions in Equatorial Africa, by Dr. Leighton Wilson. We should have stated that Dr. Wilson is the American missionary referred to by Dr. Livingstone in the introduction to his work on the Zambesi and its tributaries, as having written "by far the ablest work on the West Coast that has yet appeared."

PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AMERICA.—A vigorous society in the United States is engaged in collecting works illustrative of Presbyterian history. The society has taken an important step in advance by purchasing a spacious and handsome edifice in Philadelphia. The library already contains between 11,000 and 12,000 volumes; from 30,000 to 40,000 pamphlets, magazines, reviews, volumes of religious newspapers, many rare manuscripts and sermons, and a large number of portraits of ministers and ruling elders. Now that the society has obtained a house, it proposes to go forwards at a more rapid rate. It is an undertaking very much in accord with the objects of *The Catholic Presbyterian*, and we should be glad to aid in promoting it in any suitable way. Those who have spent a few hours in the public library at Geneva, and examined the most interesting collection of portraits, manuscripts, and books connected with the history of the Reformation there, may easily understand what an interesting and valuable institution this Philadelphia undertaking may become. All prosperity and encouragement attend its friends!

THE COMING PHILADELPHIA COUNCIL.—The following statement by Dr. Schaff

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in the Free Church Assembly at Edinburgh indicates the state of matters with reference to the coming Council:—"The Committee of Arrangements, appointed two years ago, consisted of two sections—the Business Committee, residing in Philadelphia, which was to raise the funds, and that would be done during next winter; and the Committee on the Programme, which resides at New York, and of which he was convener. This committee had prepared a programme which embraced about thirty topics—doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and practical. Besides these there were several reports to be given in from committees appointed by last Council, one of which was 'Creeds and Subscription to Creeds.' They proposed that these topics be discussed in ten or twelve days, three probably on each day; that ten papers be received from Great Britain, ten from the Continent, and ten from the United States. These papers must be carefully matured, and would make up the intellectual feast. It was, therefore, very important that the speakers be secured at an early stage in order to have ample time to mature their thoughts on the subject they might choose for this programme. That was one of the principal objects for which he was present among them. It was the desire of his committee that those representative men, who were to bring the wisdom and experience of the Churches in Scotland, England, and Ireland to the Council, should be chosen by the Churches themselves either directly or indirectly. He hoped, therefore, the Assembly would, at an early date, not only appoint a large and strong deputation of ministers and laymen to America, but also appoint two or four speakers for the subjects on the programme, so that, lest the two should not be able to be present, two others could take their places. He would like to put himself into communication with those gentlemen as early as possible, in order that the programme, with the names of the speakers, should be furnished before the end of the year."

GENERAL SURVEY.

SCOTLAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

If any one cannot go farther into this account of the meeting of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland than its first sentence, let him take this short report of its general tone:—it was quiet, free from any great strain of conflicting parties or movements, and its discussions gave the impression that the machinery of the Church is at present working steadily and smoothly, with good motive-power and encouraging result in the various fields of the Church's activity. Its annals are somewhat dull; but they are unmistakably prosperous. No case of discipline appeared on the roll of business, and perhaps no Assembly ever before was so absolutely free from heat in debate.

It opened with the usual pomp,—greater, Dean Stanley says, than annually attends any other church council in Christendom. The Queen's representative was Lord Rosslyn. In the historic church of St. Giles the opening sermon was preached in an inspiring manner by the retiring Moderator, Principal Tulloch. The new Moderator was Dr. Chrystal, of Auchinleck, whose claims to the honour were his worth of character and long, faithful ministry.

The first debate of very general interest was that on union with other Churches. The scandal of the ecclesiastical divisions of Scotland is pressing more and more on the general conscience, and the method of dealing with the evil, on the part of the Established Church, has been shortly this, to have the old Patronage Act repealed, and, now that this obstacle to union is out of the way, to approach (as was resolved at last Assembly) the other sections of the Scottish Church in order to obtain and earnestly consider a frank statement from them of the causes which at present

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prevent their union with the Established Church. The correspondence was conducted by a committee, of which Dr. Charteris and Lord Polwarth were conveners, and replies were received from the Free, the United Presbyterian, and other Churches. All the replies were most courteous in tone, but also most firm in adhering to the distinctive principles and grounds of separation special to each Church. The prevailing feeling of the Assembly in receiving them was that certainly no harm had been done by the step taken, while yet there was a regretful conviction that the replies gave no room to hope for any immediate good result from continuing the negotiation. Dr. Charteris moved a deliverance in this spirit. A counter-motion, hardly differing except in being more curt, was not pressed to a division. In a debate in such circumstances the one thing of importance was that it should be carried on in a high and conciliatory tone. In this respect it was, on the part of some supporters of the counter-motion, defective. The allusions of one or two speakers to other Churches were not generous. But the general sentiment of the Assembly was strongly in another direction, and found expression in Dr. Tulloch's speech, handling (as it was felt to do) a great subject in a great manner. He vindicated the action of the Church in thus approaching the others as simply its duty; he vindicated the committee's conduct of the negotiation as admirable and Christian; and while resigning expectation of good by further action of this kind, he turned with hope to many other influences, and especially to the growing sense of Christian responsibility in the matter among their own and other ministers.

Another debate, which had been looked forward to with expectation, took place on the subscription of elders to the Confession of Faith. For successive years overtures have come up to the Assembly, and motions have been made for some relaxation in their subscription, the chief reason urged being the extent of the document, and the amount of theological training requisite for subscribing it with intelligence and reality. The proposal has been resisted, and always rejected, chiefly in dread of its being, or being interpreted to be, a first step towards altering the whole relation of the Church to the Confession. The debate was conducted this year with the same animation as in former years, Dr. Story leading the movement for change, Dr. Scott leading on the conservative side. But the serious interest of the debate had greatly lessened. Never before was the interest so much in the mere fence of the discussion, so little in the topic itself. The reasons of this are not far to seek. All appearance of audacity in such a motion has been taken away by the gravity of questions agitated elsewhere, which throw such a movement as this, in regard to elders, quite into the shade. And again, there is no great strain of opposite convictions on the subject in the Church of Scotland. It is quite well understood that the Church's creed must be administered with constant regard to the difference between what is fundamental in doctrine and what is less essential; and the Church has for years back been tolerant in regard to non-essentials. No very strong objection, indeed, was felt to the new formula for elders. Many well known as conservative in spirit voted for it. Another formula, understood to be preferred by Drs. Tulloch and Mitchell, might have had still more votes. But by a considerable majority the change was refused, and the significance of the vote may be taken to be that the Assembly sees no need of greater liberty than at present, and discourages even the appearance of actual abandonment of the Confession.

A marked feature of Assemblies now, as compared with some the writer can remember years ago, is the increased interest felt in the missionary and other enterprises of the Church. The giving in of reports on Home Missions, Foreign Missions, and Endowment Schemes may be counted upon in each case to draw a full and spirited house. No incident of the Assembly this year was more stirring than when, after a weighty and instructive address from Mr. Wilson of the Calcutta Institution, Lord Balfour interposed with a motion, that before the house went further, the thanks of the Assembly be conveyed to the missionary, which was accordingly done through the Moderator. The addresses of foreign delegates

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(Dr. Schaff and others from the United States, Mr. Croil from Canada, MM. Lorriaux, Hoedemaker, &c., from the Continent) were also listened to with interest, and one great advantage of the Presbyterianism of Scotland showed itself, viz., that it enables our Churches to give valued acknowledgment and help to the Protestant Churches of the Continent, while the Church of England is found in the position of overlooking these, recognising rather the jurisdiction of Roman Bishops and making overtures to the Greek Church.

In regard to church statistics, perhaps too frequent congratulatory reference was made to the recent parliamentary return, exhibiting an increase in the membership of the Established Church of 55,000 in the past five years (the total 515,000 in 1878), and indicating that the Church is advancing much more than in proportion to the population of the country. Although for the most part supported by endowment, the voluntary gifts of the Church now reach a very considerable sum, and this last year, in spite of the commercial disaster of the City of Glasgow Bank, it was gratifying to find a slight increase on the former year, the total amount being £381,000.

A debate of some interest and gravity took place in regard to the abuse and use of Fast-days before the Lord's Supper, which are turned into holidays now by so many in the large towns; and a discussion arose on the last day of meeting on Sir Alexander Gordon's Bill in Parliament, whose aim is understood to be the removal of some remaining obstacles to union of Scottish Churches. A Highland minister's speech on this last had considerable effect on the House. He told of the improved relations between Free and Established Church people in the Highlands, of their common hope of a day of reconciliation, and entreated the Assembly to do nothing that might seem to forbid that hope. Many members, however, have little expectation of union being attained through legislation now, and the only step taken was to appoint a committee to watch the Bill and report, if necessary, to the Commission of Assembly.

Mention may be made of an understanding come to at some morning meetings annually held for prayer and conference. As the press of business in the Assembly is always great, a suggestion was adopted to attempt a gathering of ministers and others in autumn for conference in regard to the practical work of the ministry and the inner life of the Church, at which papers might be read on topics of this class, and moderate discussion follow. In prayer, that this have prosperous issue, may not all readers of these lines gladly join together?

In giving this short account of the Assembly, it has been the endeavour of the writer to be judicial and true; but as what he has written may still be affected by his individual leanings and point of view, he thinks it well to take the responsibility openly, and append his name.

JAMES ROBERTSON.

WHITTINGHAME, June, 1879.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

In the Free Church Assembly the Chair passing from a Bonar to a Burns suggested not a little of what has been most characteristic of that Church. Both names connect themselves with that form of evangelistic ardour which has been a leading element of Free Church activity all along. Dr. Andrew Bonar, an evangelistic preacher of high character and great pastoral diligence, the friend, fellow-traveller, and biographer of M'Cheyne, and closely related to many ministers of like spirit and aims, proposed as his successor Mr. Burns, of Kirkliston, a diligent and successful country minister, much esteemed by his friends, though less known in outside circles for personal qualities than as the brother-in-law of the late Dr. Guthrie, the cousin of William Burns, the China missionary, and the near connexion of a large circle of able and devoted ministers of Christ. The occupation of the Chair of the Assembly by two such men in succession seemed to show that the spiritual and evangelistic element has suffered no abatement in the estimation of the Free Church; and that it remains her strong desire that, as the

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cultivation of that spirit has been alike her privilege and her strength in the past, it shall be her privilege and her strength in all time to come.

The Free Church Assembly consists of an equal number of ministers and elders, all appointed by the Presbyteries, in the proportion of one out of every three ministers, and an elder for every minister. The membership of the Assembly exceeded 700—an awkwardly large number, but the Church is slow to reduce it, as the coming up of so many elders from all parts of the country promotes their intelligent acquaintance with the Church and interest in her work.

In a financial point of view, the income of the Church has suffered much less from the recent disasters in business, and the depressed condition of all interests, than might have been expected. In an income, from all sources, of between £500,000 and £600,000 a decrease of a few thousands is not to be wondered at. The Sustentation Fund maintained the same equal dividend as before—£160; but the surplus fund from which proportionate additions are made to the incomes of most of the ministers was somewhat smaller, and those who had received £200 last year had this year to be content with £190. It was considered a proof of the firm hold which the Church has on the affections of her people, that in a year of such manifold suffering the contributions should remain so steady.

The most interesting case before the Assembly was that of Professor Smith, of Aberdeen. This case, which, from a multitude of technical complications, had assumed an almost incomprehensible aspect, was reduced, by consent of parties, to a state of great simplicity; and the only issue really was, What is to be done in connection with Professor Smith's views of the origin of Deuteronomy? Last Assembly had ruled by a majority that these views are inconsistent with the Confession of Faith, and no attempt was made in this Assembly to reverse that decision. The question of Deuteronomy being now the only question, it was moved by Dr. Andrew Bonar that the Presbytery of Aberdeen be instructed to proceed, and if, either by admission or proof, the charge against Mr. Smith should be sustained, to suspend him till next Assembly, when final judgment would be given in the case. It was also moved by Principal Rainy that, before proceeding further, the Assembly should appoint a committee to confer with Professor Smith, and endeavour to come to a result honouring to the truth of God, and fitted to secure all the weighty interests at stake. On a vote, 321 members voted for Dr. Bonar's motion and 320 for Dr. Rainy's. People outside naturally ask, What does this imply? It is difficult to answer the question so as to satisfy all. But it may be stated that both sides are agreed in repudiating and opposing rationalism, and in upholding the Divine inspiration and authority of the Bible. Both sides are agreed, too, in believing Professor Smith to be a man of high ability, a true believer, sound in the faith generally, and loyal to his Church. But Dr. Bonar's friends hold not only that his view of Deuteronomy is inconsistent with inspiration, but that it involves, and must be followed by, other views subversive of the authority of Holy Scripture, and that however deeply the Church would regret the loss of Mr. Smith, it is time for her to put down her foot, and show that such views will not be tolerated in her pale. The supporters of Dr. Rainy, on the other hand, feel an intense reluctance to throw overboard a man who is so much in sympathy with the Church in her great spirit and aims; they shrink from the imposition, as it seems to them, of a new term of communion; and they recognise more fully the difficulties of the question, and the necessity of great deliberation in taking up a final attitude regarding it. Both sides admit that the difficulty of the case has been immensely increased by the reckless manner in which the question was first raised, without even an attempt to prepare the Church for considering it, and by other complications that have arisen since. And both sides are equally desirous to commit the whole matter to the great Head of the Church.

Much of the time of the Assembly was taken up with home and foreign missions, church extension, colonial and continental churches, temperance, the state of religion, evangelistic deputations, disestablishment, theological colleges, Sabbath schools, and the welfare of the young. On two of these subjects, owing to excited

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feelings in a few ardent brethren, something like an explosion was expected. A Highland brother sounded a blast of his trumpet against the teaching of the theological halls, but, unlike Roderick Dhu, he could get no army to start to his call. A Lowland brother was prepared with another blast against the committee on the welfare of youth, which has done much to stimulate Bible classes; but when his time came, instead of the loud blare of the trumpet, he gave forth a few words of mild apology and compliment.

The settlement of the question of the evangelistic chair, referred to in a former number of this journal, was reserved for another year. Dr. George Smith, formerly of Calcutta and of Serampore, author of the "Life of Dr. Wilson" and the "Life of Dr. Duff," was appointed Secretary to the Foreign Missions Committee. A favourable report was given in of the Livingstonia Mission, and of the operations now going on on the west side of Lake Nyassa. In circles private and semi-private, much interest was felt in the presence of Miss Waterston, of Inverness, a devoted lady, who, after taking a distinguished place as a medical graduate, goes to Livingstonia, the first female medical missionary from Scotland to Africa, under promise, it may be added, of sending a speedy contribution to these pages. The Gordon Mission in Zululand—a memorial mission founded by the Earl of Aberdeen's family in memory of the Hon. J. H. Gordon—lies desolate in consequence of the lamentable Zulu war. May next year's report have brighter tidings regarding it!

W. G. B.

WALES.

NOTES OF A WELSH REVIVAL.

OF the multitude of tourists who visit North Wales in the summer season, there are few who do not make a halt at Beddgelert. It is a beautiful village situated amid rocks and gorges and rushing streams, and is a centre and starting-point for some of the grandest scenery, not only in Carnarvonshire, but likewise in the whole of the Principality. It lies at the foot of Snowdon, the summit of which may be reached from it by four or five hours' busy climbing, and though it is not so easy an ascent as that from Llanberis, on the northern side, it is chosen in preference to it by many, because it is wilder and grander.

It is at this place, in the year 1818, that a great religious awakening began, and from here it spread far and wide in every direction, giving a new impetus to religious life throughout Carnarvonshire and the adjoining counties.

An account of that revival has recently appeared in two admirable papers in the Welsh language, in the *Drysorfa*, from the pen of one of the oldest and best of the Calvinistic Methodist ministers of North Wales—the Rev. Robert Ellis, Ysgoldy, Carnarvonshire, who had himself received it from eye-witnesses.

A few of the incidents of that revival I now propose to record, in the hope that they may afford some help to elucidate the question suggested by Dr. Marshall Lang in his excellent article on "Revival and Revivalism" in the February number of *The Catholic Presbyterian*, and also because they serve to throw light on the origin and progress of the Welsh Presbyterian Church.

At the date I have mentioned, there was in the village of Beddgelert, besides the parish church, a small Calvinistic Methodist chapel, to which belonged a church numbering about forty communicants. For more than twenty years this little flock had stood at about the same number, just maintaining its ground, and gaining enough from without to fill the gaps made by deaths and removals; and at the beginning of 1818 there was nothing to indicate that any change was approaching in the state of things which had existed for many years. But gradually, as the year went on, a new feeling began to pervade the assemblies. It became easier to preach the Word, and more pleasant to hear it. The ministry seemed to tell more than usually on the congregations, and, what had not been known at the place for a long time before, two or three came forward asking to be admitted into the membership of the church, and showing hopeful evidences

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of conversion. An unusual influence, likewise, began to be felt in the Sunday school. One Sabbath, a young female teacher and her class of girls were reading the concluding chapters of St. John's Gospel, when one by one they began to weep, and so strong did the emotion become that they were unable to continue the reading. At the close one of the brethren, Richard Roberts, of Caeygors, stood up to address the school, and earnestly exhorted the young people to conduct themselves properly at a fair which was to be held in the neighbourhood during the ensuing week, and all at once, to the astonishment of his hearers, and of none more than himself, he became eloquent. He quoted a verse of a Welsh hymn, the concluding line of which, being translated, is, "The firmer hold's above." The word "above" took possession of his whole mind, and for a long time he rang the changes upon it. "It is from *above* that everything precious comes to us—the light comes from *above*, and the heat and the rain. The blessings of salvation come to the world from *above*. It is from *on high* that God pours His Spirit. There is hope for the hardened sinners of Beddgelert *above*. If it is dark here, it is light *above*. If it is feeble here, it is mighty *above, above, above*." While he spoke the power descended from *above*, and every soul in the place felt it. All became conscious of a great and mysterious presence; many of the children were filled with dread, and one lad ran to his father, exclaiming, "O my dear father! here *is* the day of judgment! It *has* come!" There was universal weeping, and when the school separated it was in tears.

Religious services were stately held at two out-stations, lying in different directions, at distances of two and three miles from the chapel. One of these was at the small village of Nantmor, and the other at a farm-house called Havod-y-Llan, standing in the Gwynnant glen, which winds up from Beddgelert, along the base of Snowdon. The ministry of those days was wholly itinerant, and continues to be so to a large extent among the Calvinistic Methodists. On the Sabbath to which reference has been made, the supply at Beddgelert was a very humble "exhorter," one Richard Williams of Brynengan. Under ordinary circumstances he would have held services at the two out-stations in the morning and afternoon, and at the chapel in the evening; but on this occasion it was arranged that he should preach in the morning at Nantmor, in the afternoon at the chapel, and in the evening up the glen at Havod-y-Llan. The reason for this departure from the usual course was that the renowned John Elias, then in the zenith of his power and popularity, was to preach that evening at Tremadoc, seven miles distant, and the chapel at Beddgelert was closed, that the congregation which usually assembled in it might be free to go to hear him. A large number of people usually assembled at the farm-house, but it was very rarely that all, or even the majority of those who had come together took any part in, or paid any attention to, the service. The district was sparsely populated, people came together from great distances, and they looked at the meeting at Havod as a good opportunity to see one another, and to have a talk. A few of the more thoughtful would join in the service, while others sat in the parlour, or stood in groups about the court, busily engaged in conversation on things which were far more interesting to them than hymns, prayers, and sermons. It was so on this occasion. Richard Williams stood on a bench in the kitchen; in front of him was a square table, and on the top of that a small round one, doing duty as a reading-desk. He introduced the service in the usual way, but with more than usual fervour and unction, and the subject of his discourse was, "Coming to Christ." He had a sermon in his mind, and one with which he was perfectly familiar, for he had frequently preached it before; but when he had spoken for about a quarter of an hour he lost it quite, and began to say things that he had never thought of. It was not his own thoughts that he spoke now, and those which he uttered were not expressed in his usual style, nor with his usual voice. He felt that some One "was speaking through him," and for some time he was in doubt whether it was he himself that was preaching, or whether he was listening to another. The giddy ones that were talking in the parlour and outside became conscious that there was

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something unusual going on, and rushed into the kitchen with one accord. There they stood spell-bound and awe-struck, listening to the mighty words. No one uttered a voice. No one wept. The feeling of awe upon every one present was too great for shouts, and even for tears; and when, at the close, the preacher gave out a hymn, no one was able to sing. The congregation separated in silence, and every one went his way to his own home, thinking and afraid. What was it? It could not have been anything else than this which has been written, "The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word."

In the course of the ensuing week a church meeting, or as it is usually designated in Wales, a "society," was held at the chapel. Those meetings were weekly, and were usually held at 10 o'clock, or at noon, on a working day, for many of the members lived at great distances, and had to reach their homes along paths that were anything but pleasant to travel on in the dark. The Calvinistic Methodists had not then, nor have they ever had, a hard-and-fast rule of procedure in the reception of members. In some cases those who express a wish to join the Church are proposed, seen and conversed with by some of the elders, reported on by them to the church meeting, and, if thought suitable, accepted; but very frequently, such persons, without giving any formal notice of their intention, present themselves at the church meeting, and hence it is that, when any one has made a profession of religion, it is very usual in Wales to say that "he has gone to the society." On this occasion two of the elders, who had arrived early, were waiting at the chapel-house for the people to assemble. By-and-by, one of them looked into the chapel to see whether any had come, and immediately returned to his friend saying, "Sure enough, the people have made a mistake—there is a large congregation. It seems to me as if the whole parish had come together. They must be expecting a sermon." But it soon appeared that it was not a sermon that they had come to seek, but salvation; and at the singing of the opening hymn many of them saw a gleam of hope that, lost sinners as they were, they should find it by the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and their pent-up feelings burst over all bounds. It was not possible to converse with any one, for nearly all were shouting with all their might. Tidings of this went out to the village, and to the scattered dwellings beyond; people rushed to the chapel to see, and as soon as they arrived caught the infection, and began to shout like the rest. And thus they continued hour after hour throughout the day and late into the night; and when at length they retired to their homes, some of their own accord, and others led by friends who were more self-possessed than themselves, the rocks which bounded the gorges through which they had to pass echoed and re-echoed their shouts of praise.

It was thus that this great revival began, and it continued thus for many months. At every religious service the same wonderful influence was felt, and frequently at the singing of the first hymn a fire kindled, which made public prayer and preaching impossible. When the preacher was allowed to proceed as far as the beginning of his sermon in comparative quietness, if he wished to give it all he must be very cool and cautious, for the least spark would produce an explosion which would make it useless for him to speak any more on that occasion. And it was not in the public services only that these influences were felt. They came upon people in an unaccountable manner when alone, or in company, or when they were following their daily avocations, and when, as far as men could see, there was nothing to induce them. A young woman, who was remarkable for her personal comeliness, was engaged in milking her father's cows, when thoughts came into her mind which filled her with fear, and sent her home crying, "What shall I do to be saved?" She found the answer, *was* saved, and lived to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour." Two young people, the son and the servant of one of the elders of the Church, were bringing a cart into Beddgelert, when they began to sing a hymn quietly together. As they were singing the fire kindled, and they were drawn into the village shouting and praising in the cart, the horses having been left to guide themselves. It was hay-carrying day at one of the neighbouring farms, and the man who made the mow finding a longer interval

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than usual elapsing before the arrival of a fresh load, looked towards the field, and lo! the haymakers had thrown away their pitchforks and rakes, and were "leaping and praising God." It may be said that all this was very disorderly, and a sad breach of the decorum which ought to characterise the worship of God, and very probably that is true. But there is one thing to be said in favour of those poor people—they could not help it.

The influence soon began to spread to other districts. In many instances people came to Beddgelert to see the wonder, caught the fire, and took it home with them. A number of young people crossed the mountain from Dolyddelen, rejoicing in anticipation of the "fun" they were going to have. They were disappointed in the fun, but they found salvation; and one of them, Cadwallader Owen, became a minister of the Gospel, and was for many years one of the most useful in the Principality. But while it spread into Merionethshire on the south, and the Isle of Anglesea on the north, it was on Carnarvonshire, and especially on that division of it that is called Arvon, that it made the deepest impression, and produced the greatest change. Previous to 1818, there were in this district only fifteen Calvinistic Methodist chapels, all of which, with two or three exceptions, were small and poor, but in a very short time all these were rebuilt and enlarged, and twelve new places of worship were erected in localities where there were none before. The impetus then given to religion has never wholly subsided, and there are now in that district seventy-two Calvinistic Methodist churches, with 13,770 communicants. Besides this, there were men born again in that revival who became eminent ministers of the Gospel of Christ, and were the means of turning many to righteousness, and whose names will be household words in the Principality for ages yet to come.

Such is a hasty sketch of that mighty awakening which, even at this distance of time, is remembered with gratitude, and spoken of with delight in Wales as "the great Beddgelert Revival."

WM. WILLIAMS.

IRELAND.

IRISH GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THE Annual Meeting of the Assembly commenced on the 2nd of June in the church of May Street, Belfast, rendered famous by its first minister, Dr. Cooke. For the last half century no meeting has excited such interest. Fifty years ago Ulster was convulsed by the Arian controversy. The Churches of the Presbyterian Alliance will be surprised to learn that all Ireland is roused, in this latter part of the nineteenth century, on the subject of the use of "*hymns*" and "*instruments*" in public praise. Irish Presbyterians are eminently conservative even as regards the forms of worship. They cling with wonderful tenacity to what is known in Scotland as "the use and wont." This characteristic has some advantages in these shifting times, when so many betray impatience of the old landmarks and the old moorings. As the Assembly drew near, great anxiety was felt by the lovers of our Zion. Pamphlets and tracts on one side and the other filled the air, and inflamed the public mind. Hints were even thrown out of a possible secession. Men's hearts were failing them for fear, and much prayer was offered.

The first shock of battle was felt in the choice of a Moderator. The principal candidates were Mr. J. Smyth, of Armagh, and Dr. Watts. The latter was elected by a large majority. The dignity, impartiality, and wisdom with which he presided has fully justified his election.

Immediately after receiving the formal reports of synods and presbyteries, the Assembly addressed itself with great earnestness to the subject of religion and morals, as set forth in the reports on "Temperance," "Sabbath Observance," and the "State of Religion." On the temperance question the Irish Church occupies an advanced position, advocating, as it does, "Sunday Closing," the "Permissive Bill," "Bands of Hope," and commending total abstinence to all its members.

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At an early stage the Assembly was called on to elect not less than three professors. Four candidates appeared. Professor Crockery, so well known in the literary world, was unanimously chosen to fill the Chair of Divinity in the Derry College, vacant through the death of the late lamented Dr. Smyth. Rev. Mr. Dogherty, of Nottingham, a young Irishman of great promise, after a spirited contest with Rev. Mr. Morrison, was elected to the chair rendered vacant by Professor Crockery; while the chair of Dr. Porter in the Belfast College was given unanimously to Mr. Leitch, a country minister, little known out of Ireland, but distinguished in Ulster as a man of solid attainments, good sense, and ardent piety. The Assembly seemed to cherish the utmost confidence that these appointments will sustain the character of our Irish colleges for orthodoxy, efficiency, and high scholarship.

More than one sederunt was given to the question of finance. When the Church was disendowed by the Act of 1869, a Sustentation Fund was established, very much on the lines of the great scheme devised and launched by Chalmers at the Disruption. An experience of ten years has shown the necessity for alterations and emendations of the scheme. It has proved rather a difficult problem to adjust all interests, and so to work the scheme that the most powerful stimulus may be given to liberality, and that there be no way of escape for that large class in every community, who are only too ready to shirk responsibility, and leave others to bear the burden and heat of the day.

And yet this question has not been allowed to turn the Assembly aside from what must be regarded as the special mission of the Irish Church—the evangelisation of our own land. "Ireland for Christ" is becoming a watchword among us. This work has been taking hold of the hearts of our people, and has called forth a great variety of agencies. To give an opportunity for the unrestrained expression of thought, the Assembly held a conference in private on the evangelisation of Ireland. It was a most refreshing time. Men who have long occupied the field in the south and west, face to face with Popery, poured forth, in short and earnest speech, the results of their experience, and in strong faith called on the Church to go in and possess the land. One of the results of this conference was the designation of a band of men, believed to possess special gifts for evangelistic work, who are to be released from their charges for a short period, that they may give themselves wholly to special services of an evangelistic character, wherever openings may be found in any part of Ireland. This is a step in advance, and points to an earnest purpose—to bring this beautiful but benighted land "to the feet of Jesus."

The question of hymns arose on this wise. Some years ago a committee was appointed to promote a new metrical version of the psalms and suitable psalm-tunes to be used in public praise. This accomplished, the question arose, what is to be done with the paraphrases which, from time immemorial, have been bound up with our Bibles, and used by many congregations. No instructions had been given. The question of revising them also arose, and the addition of a collection of hymns that might receive the sanction of the Assembly. To this effect two overtures came up. The advocates of what is called our "improved psalmody" took the alarm, and mustered in great force. The evening of Wednesday was fixed for the discussion. Long before the opening of the court, the house was crowded in every part. The debate was maintained with great ability and in good spirit far beyond the small hours of the morning. When the vote was taken, long after the sun had begun to pour his golden beams on the excited multitude, it was found the clerical vote was nearly equal. But the elders, by a large majority, turned the scale against using hymns and improving paraphrases. A dissent was entered, and the Assembly dispersed at four in the morning in brotherhood unbroken.

This, however, was but a preliminary skirmish. The decisive battle was reserved for Friday. On that day the Assembly was to declare whether any congregation should have liberty to use an instrument in public praise. The question

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has been before the Church for ten years, and, however strange it may appear to our American and Continental friends, it is nevertheless true that this is the burning question with us just now. A motion in favour of some modicum of liberty was made by Mr. Macnaughtan in a speech, wise, moderate, and replete with all the graces of the most exalted Christian rhetoric. The Assembly was in no mood to be carried away by either rhetoric or logic, otherwise his appeal would have melted all hearts into ready acquiescence. His opponents rose one after another, alternated by men not less able and not less determined. For four hours the artillery of words rolled over the excited and sympathising audience. The House adjourned from four till seven. Long before this short interval expired, the Church was again crowded, while multitudes pressed round the doors outside. So compact was that living mass, that several members of the Court were unable to get in. The Mayor interposed several times to make way for them, and, after all, several were excluded. The conflict was resumed with unabated vigour. For four hours more the national character for eloquence was sustained. Rhetorical swords flashed and gleamed till midnight, when the Moderator declared that the House was ready for the vote. In favour of liberty there was a large majority of the clergy, but again the scale was turned by the elders, who voted two to one against any and every instrument but the living voice in the praise of God. A dissent was entered, and the ominous cloud surcharged with fears of all kinds was lifted up and rolled away by Him who can so easily bring light out of darkness, and order out of confusion. The members retired to their homes in the best of humour with themselves and with each other—not a solitary man, as I believe, cherishing a grudge against a brother.

One of the most pleasing incidents in the Assembly was the reception of deputies from other Churches. Of these we had a full share this year. A brother from the Eastern Reformed Synod made a very able and judicious speech, inspiring us with the hope that the time may not be distant when all sections of Presbyterianism in Ireland may be gathered into one Church. Can your readers believe that in this little island the Presbyterian people are broken up into *six* Churches, with no visible bond of union and no common church life? We have "The Reformed Synod of Ireland," "The Eastern Reformed Synod," "The United Presbyterians," "The Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland," distinguished by the name Seceders, "The Original Secession," and "The General Assembly"—all substantially one in doctrine, government, and worship!

The deputies from the Free Church of Scotland—Dr. Andrew Bonar, the Earl of Kintore, and Mr. Ross—were cordially welcomed, as well as those from the English Presbyterian Church of England and from the Evangelical Church and Society of Geneva.

The second week was far less vigorous than the first. Our space permits us only to say that Foreign Missions, Colonial Missions, and Home Missions received the attention of the Assembly, as well as Sabbath schools, training of ministers, systematic beneficence; and that Education was particularly considered, there being no less than three committees on that subject—for elementary, intermediate, and higher education. The Bill of the O'Connor Don was strongly opposed.

The Presbyterian Alliance excites in Ireland a very lively interest, and the Assembly passed a strong resolution in its favour. Active steps were taken for promoting union and co-operation with kindred Churches.

Throughout the proceedings of this Assembly there was the most gratifying evidence that the Irish Church is sound at heart in matters of faith, and that the faith she will defend at all hazards. This may help to account for the nervous apprehension displayed (especially by the elders) of the slightest departure from the old lines even in the form of worship. Members of foreign Churches should make account of this when they express astonishment at the decisions arrived at on the subject of hymns and instruments in public praise. These will not be always burning questions. They will settle themselves in due time.

Another subject for thankfulness to God is the earnestness with which this

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Church has grasped the idea of conquering Ireland for Christ. In this enterprise she has a claim on the sympathy and help of all the large and powerful Churches of the Reformation.

ROBERT KNOX.

FRANCE.

Letter from Rev. G. FISCH, D.D., Paris.

I WILL endeavour in this letter to convey an idea of the remarkable internal struggle in which our whole nation may be said to be engaged. An immense gulf now stretches between the mass of our nation, on the one side, determined to keep its liberties under our present institutions; and, on the other hand, the Popish clergy, now fighting for the Syllabus, under the avowed leadership of the Jesuits. The battle had raged hitherto on political grounds. Every assault against our Republic was led by the Society of Jesus. After the victory of the Republicans, the conflict broke out in the religious sphere. The Republicans had experienced the immense power of their adversaries, their marvellous organisation, and the alarming progress of their religious orders. They had taken note of the thousands of convents which had sprung up for these last seventy years, possessing milliards of property, and forming an army of 200,000 warriors, all equipped against our civil society. They had ascertained that the non-authorised orders had increased fivefold the number of their houses and monks since 1824. They had seen that whilst, in the eighteenth century, Voltaire and other prominent philosophers had been the results of Jesuit teaching, in our day young men more skilfully trained leave the Reverend Fathers thoroughly imbued with the views of the order, and hating to the utmost the form of society in which they are to live. These men fill the magistracy, the army, and every post of influence. The danger is growing and immense.

Our Government decided to declare an open war on the enemies of our social order, and to begin with their general staff. They proposed to close the colleges kept by the Jesuits and the non-authorised orders. This war will last for years. The clergy has on its side the nobility, a great part of the higher and middle classes, who were thrown into their arms by the fear of the Commune, most of the women, and a large number of Republicans, who claim the rights of liberty for the worst enemies of the Republic. The great bulk of the Government's forces are composed of freethinkers, who reject Christianity altogether, but remaining in a Church which they ridicule and abhor, leave the education of the children to their wives, and send them sometimes to clerical schools.

But this conflict between civil society and Popery affords us a great opening for our missionary efforts. This is especially the fact in the country districts. In provincial towns it is the fashion in the so-called high circles to be clerical, in order to please the nobility, which is ultramontane in the extreme. The lower classes are dependent upon the wealthy for employment and work, and are under such a bondage that a shopkeeper becoming Protestant would lose immediately his customers. But the millions of little landed proprietors who fill our villages are completely independent, and are thus ready to receive the Gospel when it is preached to them. The Christianity of the Lord and of the apostles is to them like the discovery of a precious jewel which had been hitherto hidden from their sight. All our religious societies testify that multitudes are now longing for the Word of God. Neither the Central nor the Evangelical Society can meet all the appeals. The Evangelical Society has three agents in the department of Meuse, where the Protestant religion was unknown a few years ago. They preach regularly in forty-nine different townships. Around the bigoted city of Avallon, in the Nivernais, there are now ten towns and villages where the preaching is attended by more than 2000 people, and this religious movement reminds us of the times of the Reformation. New churches among converts increase rapidly. Remarkable conversions take place. And we enjoy such a religious liberty that we may preach in every one of our 37,000 townships. In the present Cabinet, five Secretaries of State are Pro-

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testants, one is a Jew, three are Catholic freethinkers, and only one is supposed to attend mass.

We must use this *unique* time. Whilst we tarry, detained by our want of means, infidelity grows in awful proportions. The blasphemies uttered by our popular press of Paris defy all imagination, and the lawsuits instituted by the Government against their editors have swelled the torrent instead of arresting it. A painful fact came to show us how weak we are, and how much we need power from on high. A newspaper had been started in order to show to our inconsistent freethinkers how despicable and dangerous it was for them to remain in the Church of Rome, and how much the Protestant religion answered their higher wants. This paper appeared only for a few days. However, we must not be discouraged. A good undertaking scarcely succeeds without many previous attempts. We will study the lesson given by this failure to do better.

Our Presbyterian Alliance had for one of its objects to strengthen the hands of the feeble churches. We are one of them—the remnant of these Huguenots who were the fathers of Presbytery. But this remnant is weak, scattered, hampered by sad divisions, and by the ties of State patronage. And in this poor state it has to fulfil an immense task. Millions of immortal souls look up to it in order to receive the bread of life. Oh! let the joint prayer of the Presbyterian brethren throughout the world ascend to God on our behalf.

GERMANY.

By Rev. J. E. CARLYLE.

I VENTURED, in a late notice of Germany, to say, that a number of questions more strictly political than religious seemed to occupy a somewhat undue place in some of the German religious journals. I am interested to observe that the highest church authority in Prussia—the *Oberkirchenrath*—has given lately sound advice on this subject. They say—we translate from their published address—"It is the vocation of the ministry to bring near to all the Gospel of Peace; especially is it their duty, both in the part they take in political and social life—so emotionally excited at present—and also in the exercise of their political rights, to have regard to that foresight and reserve which their office—as opening the way for the kingdom of heaven, and for preaching the Gospel of the kingdom—brings with it." They add, that pastors should do their best to promote such benevolent institutions as care for the old and sick, for savings banks, and for healthy habitations for the working classes; at the same time realising that these are not the highest aims of Christianity. "On the other hand," they state definitely, "it is not the office of the servants of the Church to propound and support economical and social political theories."

We must, in all humility, admit that some of these strictures of the *Oberkirchenrath* may apply to other Churches than the German; although, as regards Anglo-Saxon Christianity, scarcely to the same extent. Still, politico-ecclesiastical questions have perhaps more attractions for us also than they merit, considering the great commission which we bear. As regards German Christianity, its strength lies, as the *Oberkirchenrath* suggests, in its own direct work. German Evangelical Christianity is not a negative form of religion—it is the vigorous, earnest, and most learned, we may add, defender of Bible truth, and it is the courageous and vigorous opponent of that rationalism and atheism which have so many supporters in Germany in the literary and political world. The Church of Luther has, as at the Reformation, the courage of its opinions; and, we venture to add, that if there be any hope for the Germany of the future, it lies in the success of their work—evangelical, evangelistic, and philanthropic—to reclaim its peoples to the Gospel of Christ.

We are interested to notice the synodical arrangements of the German Churches. As these advance to completion, it is more and more clearly seen that they are based on the principles of Presbyterian parity. We see the same process,

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indeed, going on in the Anglican Church, especially in the Colonies and in Ireland ; but it is still more marked in Germany. The lay element will there have its due and equal place,—if we are indeed to call the eldership such, holding, as it did, in primitive Christianity, a true church place. We take, as an instance of this Presbyterian progress, the proposed order in the Rhenish Westphalian Synod.* There is first the individual churches, with their minister or ministers and elders, corresponding to our kirk-session. Then there is the Kreis Synode, analogous to our presbytery. This consists of the ministers of the district, and as many elders as there are congregations. To secure parity, it is arranged that if there are two ministers to a congregation, there shall be also two elders, and that if there be one minister to two congregations, the latter shall only send one representative. The Provincial Synod shall again have also an equal number of ministers and elders. While the establishment of synods and the rule of parity give thus a Presbyterian character to the German Evangelical Church, it, of course, still remains true that in Germany, in contradistinction to Anglican Presbytery, there is a distinct executive ecclesiastical authority apart from the synodical. Still, we cannot doubt that the synodical must ultimately, as representing the legislative authority, become the ruling power, and this is Presbytery really in its fundamental character.

We do not in this statement overlook the important fact, that the orthodox Evangelical party in Germany is still divided. This is not so much about church order as regarding the sacraments. We are far from wishing to overlook the distinction. It is one of great import. Still, the position of both the Evangelical parties is one utterly opposed to rationalism ; and we may add that theirs is not a mere suspension of old hostilities,—they look to peace and alliance. Difficulties are discussed in that friendly sense which belongs only to those who would be friends ; and those who are outside may readily agree how well this might be the case. But this can only be accomplished if neither overvalue its own point of view, nor underestimate that of its opponent. Historical standpoints cannot be overlooked in looking to a solution, and a federative union is all that we can meanwhile anticipate.

I may be permitted here to notice the very friendly remarks of the *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung* regarding this journal. It cordially admits the importance of Presbytery as represented in its late General Council. All will own, as regards this German journal, the invaluable service which its founder, Dr. Hengstenberg, rendered as regards the exposition of the Old Testament. None have more appreciated this—for none, we may venture to say, have more valued the Old Testament Scriptures—than Puritan and Presbyterian theologians. As regards politics, Hengstenberg's views were somewhat extreme. He never, in fact, understood clearly our Anglo-Saxon Christianity ; with him whatever was not Lutheranism was too readily interpreted as rationalism. But his journal is now more liberal-minded, although staunch as ever in its fundamental principles. It expresses its interest regarding Presbytery as assuming so œcumenical and catholic a position,—in relation, at least, to the Anglo-Saxon races. It admits that we have quite as much warrant to do so as the Anglican Church, which makes so great pretensions to embrace the world. It gracefully acknowledges the services which Presbytery has rendered, alike to scientific theology and to practical Christianity, by its missions. It regards this journal, indeed, as scarcely serving itself heir to the Presbytery of Knox and Melville and the Westminster Council. We are too conciliatory in our tone as regards other Churches for this. If it be so, we cannot view this as a defection from Presbytery. A close study of the whole action of Calvin and Knox will show that, while resolute in opposing Romanism, none were more catholic-minded as regarded the brotherhood of the Evangelical Reformed Churches.

A somewhat curious question has arisen as to the relation of German Evangelical Christianity to the Anglican Church in connection with the lamented death of Dr. Gobat, the late Bishop of Jerusalem. Cardinal Newman has told us how it

* See *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*, 3rd May, 1879, page 342.

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decided him as to the heretical character of Anglican Protestantism. We are somewhat curious as to the decision which may now be arrived at, considering especially the fraternisation of late years of the Anglican with the Greek Church. There has been no such recognition on its part of the Protestant Churches of the Reformation. But whatever may be the issue on this question, there can be no doubt that Catholic Presbytery is far more closely allied to German Evangelical Christianity than Episcopacy, with its arrogant pretensions as to orders, can be. We shall certainly hail as a token that catholicity has still its place in the Church of England, the acceptance by Archbishop Tait of united action for the future in the nomination of a Bishop of Jerusalem.

We reserve the great subject of Missions for another paper; meanwhile we conclude by noticing an engrossing topic—the German view of Russian Nihilismus, which differs somewhat from ours. Being near neighbours, the Germans ought to know more about this than we do. Their idea is, we may say, in general, that Nihilismus is not allied to German Socialism. The latter goes to the very roots of society; Nihilismus in Russia belongs rather to the upper class. It is not supposed to embrace more than 20,000 secret members. It is, in fact, the old spirit of Russian conspiracy, only somewhat extended as regards the ruling classes. It is the higher middle class protesting against the exclusivism of the bureaucratic class, and expressing its indignation against its wretched jobbing rule. Some of the German ecclesiastical journals are so absurd as to hold that Judaism is at the bottom of it. The Jews advocate constitutionalism—a system which the High Church German party fancies to be as certain ruin to any country as the Manchesterism of Mr. Bright. One cannot but regret that in a country of such learning as Germany, ideas so frivolous and so contrary alike to science and to that broad and deep cosmopolitanism which Christianity enjoins should prevail.

UNITED STATES.

NOTES OF THE ASSEMBLY MEETINGS.

If in some points the Presbyterian Churches of the New World differ from those of the parent stock, in this at least they resemble them, that the annual meetings of their Supreme Courts are always held—as in Scotland—during the month of May. This year it has happened that the Assemblies of three great Churches—the Presbyterian Church, North; the Presbyterian Church, South; and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church—met, though in different places, on the same day; while the United Presbyterian Assembly and the Synods of the two branches of the Covenanters met a few days later, to be followed shortly by the General Synod of the (Dutch) Reformed Church.

The last year has been, over all the land, one of peace. Our Churches have not been troubled by internal dissension, and have dwelt in peaceful relations towards all their neighbours. If there have been no marked outpourings of the Holy Spirit, causing the wilderness and the solitary place to rejoice, and to blossom as the rose, we have every reason to believe that the stated work of the ministry—the feeding of the Church of God—has been faithfully performed. During the last winter, Mr. Moody has been residing in Baltimore, working very zealously, going round the different churches. We believe he is now of opinion that work *in* a congregation, and largely conducted *through* existing congregational agencies, though less showy and striking, yields a larger percentage of satisfactory results than his previous system of monster meetings. Such a testimony may help to restore our confidence in Christ's appointment of the ministry of the Word in the service of the sanctuary as the best for the profiting of the Church, and encourage lowly pastors and obscure Christian workers to persevere in their labour. But is it not one evidence of a revived spiritual condition when the Church deals with prevailing and fashionable sins, and calling these by their right names, warns her members against them? Now it is noteworthy that the different Assemblies that have yet met have all taken independent, yet almost

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identical, action on some of the crying sins of the day. Intemperance, Sabbath desecration, social immorality, worldly amusements, have all been taken sharply in hand and vigorously condemned, while special attention has been given to the internal work of the Church, and the machinery needful for accomplishing it.

The Cumberland Church is an offshoot from the Presbyterian, owing its existence to the irregularities that accompanied a season of religious excitement nearly seventy years ago. Though Presbyterian in name and polity, its doctrinal position connects it with the Evangelical Union of Scotland, with which Church it is in close relationship. It exists mainly in our south-western States, and now numbers some fourteen hundred congregations. No matter of any interest to outsiders came before its Assembly.

The Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, South, met in Louisville. Among the items of its business I may mention the adoption of a Book of Church Order, a kind of manual of principles and procedure, which has been for some years in preparation, and is very highly spoken of by those that know it. A proposal to merge an existing coloured evangelistic fund in the general fund for evangelistic or Church extension purposes led to an earnest discussion. The proposal was supported by the pleas, that the work was substantially the same, and that by combining the schemes, the number of separate collections would be reduced. It was opposed, and successfully, on the ground, that such a merging would be regarded as a lessening of the Church's interest in the coloured people, when, in truth, more was being done for these each successive year.

A "Sustentation Scheme," started some years ago, was handed over to the care of the Home Mission Board. A similar course was taken some time since by the Northern Presbyterian Church—one that assuredly is proper, so long as the word "sustentation" is a misnomer. In Scotland, this word or scheme covers the minister's whole support; with us, it merely means an aid to the congregation in raising that support. Giving such aid is one part of the work of our Home Mission, and there seems no good reason for keeping alive a fiction. Before the Assembly closed, it appointed its delegates to the Presbyterian Council of 1880,—a noble band of men, among whose names we see with pleasure those of Drs. B. M. Palmer, of New Orleans; Wm. Brown, of Richmond; J. L. Girardeau, of Charleston; J. R. Wilson, of Wilmington, N.C. (the Moderator); S. Robinson, of Louisville, and others.

The Assembly of the Northern Presbyterian Church met at Saratoga, a country town of ten thousand people, and lying about 180 miles north of New York. The locality is remarkably rich in saline springs, whose restorative qualities attract annually an immense concourse of visitors. The "season" lasts for only three months, while the hotels are of mammoth size, some of them accommodating twelve to fifteen hundred guests. The new custom of "paying their way" came fully into operation this year, and was greatly enjoyed by the members of the Assembly, whose travelling expenses to the Assembly and board during its sessions are met by an assessment of five cents a-member over the whole Church for the former, called the Mileage Fund, and of two cents for the latter, called the Entertainment Fund. The missionary cause was recognised, and a distinguished missionary honoured, by the election of Dr. Jessup, of the Syrian Mission, as Moderator. Strong resolutions were adopted, condemnatory of theatre-going and the reading of Sunday secular newspapers, while the temperance cause was warmly upheld. The question of reducing the size of the Assembly, after eight or nine years of agitation, was settled by a very decided refusal to do so, on the grounds that the money saved by the change proposed was a very petty sum; that there was a great gain to the Church from the annual intercourse of so many of her officers whose homes were so far apart, and whose fields of labour were so dissimilar, and that a large Assembly exercised a great moral power over the whole community, a deliverance adopted by 600 men carrying far more weight than one coming from half that number. This point disposed of, steps were taken with a view to some consolidation of our numerous synods and the clothing of these consolidated

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synods with a measure of Assembly powers. A keen discussion took place on an overture asking the Assembly to reaffirm its decision of 1835, renewed in 1845, declaring the Church of Rome to be no true Church, and its baptism therefore invalid. This overture was meant to overturn a deliverance of the Assembly in 1877, by which the rebaptising of converts from Romanism was left to the judgment of sessions. The debate closed with the passage of a resolution apparently reaffirming the decision of 1835, but distinguishing between the members of the Romish Church and its hierarchy. Practically, therefore, the private members of that communion are recognised as a portion of God's Church, while their religious teachers are all unchurched. When presenting their report, the Committee on Correspondence nominated several brethren as a portion of the Assembly's Delegates to the Council of 1880, at the same time recommended that, in view of the close co-operation of the different Reformed Churches in the Presbyterian Alliance, the practice of sending delegates to sister Churches each year be discontinued,—a recommendation that was very cordially adopted. The Northern, the Southern, and the United Presbyterian Churches have now all agreed on this point. Our Churches will therefore no longer send delegates to your Assembly meetings. In connection with this, I may ask your insertion of the following resolution of our Assembly indicating its entire sympathy with the high purpose to which *The Catholic Presbyterian* is devoted, and its approval of the spirit in which this Magazine is conducted :—

"The Assembly look with approval upon the publication of the monthly journal known as *The Catholic Presbyterian*. They regard it as an important contribution to the ends contemplated by 'The Presbyterian Alliance'—as a channel of communication between the different members of the great Presbyterian family ; as a bond of union among those who hold the 'like precious faith ;' and as a medium for the timely discussion of topics interesting to Presbyterians. They hope that it will have a wide circulation, and commend it accordingly to the support of the churches under their care."

During one of the sessions, the Assembly having heard that the English Presbyterian Church had invited our late Moderator, Dr. Patton, to the Chair of Apologetics in its Theological Seminary, by a standing vote adopted the following resolution :—

"Whereas, the Rev. Francis L. Patton, D.D., retiring Moderator of this Assembly, and Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology in the Seminary of the Northwest, was elected to the chair which he now fills by the Directors of said Seminary in 1872 ; and

"Whereas, this Assembly has learned that the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England, the highest judicatory of that body, has called the Rev. Dr. Patton to a similar position within its bounds ; and has urged the acceptance of the same upon him ; therefore, recognising the importance of the field now occupied by Dr. Patton, and with a hearty recognition of his distinguished services in the past, and with faith in the future, be it

"Resolved, That, commending him in the solemn choice now resting upon him to the Divine guidance, this General Assembly hereby expresses its earnest desire, if consistent with the highest interest of the Church of Christ, that Dr. Patton may remain with us, giving to this Church, as heretofore, the benefit of his services in the instruction of those who are in training for the ministry of Christ, and that the friends of the Seminary of the Northwest may be incited by this invitation from a sister Church abroad, to increase their interest in and enlarge their beneficence toward this institution."

While the final decision in this matter rests, of course, with Dr. Patton, the honouring request it addresses to our beloved brother confirms the judgment of the English Synod respecting his ability and worth.

But I have already exceeded my permitted space, and will reserve my notes of the other Churches till next month.

G. D. M.